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# PHILOSOPHICAL ESSAYS.

# PHILOSOPHICAL ESSAYS

BY

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TO

# M. PREVOST,

PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN THE ACADEMY OF GENEVA;

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AND OF EDINBURGH;

MEMBER OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF BERLIN;

CORRESPONDENT OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FRANCE,

*&c. &c. &c.*

---

*In the interrupted state of our correspondence at present, you will pardon the liberty I take, in prefixing your name to this Volume. The honour you have lately done me, by your French translation of my book on the Human Mind, and the warm interest you have always taken in the success of that work, since the period of its first appearance, I feel as the most flattering marks of approbation which it has ever received; and they might perhaps have tempted me to indulge, more than becomes me, the vanity of*

*an author, had it not been repressed by the still more pleasing idea, that I am indebted for them chiefly to the partiality of your friendship.*

*Permit me, Sir, to inscribe to you the following Essays, in testimony of my respect and attachment; and as a slight but sincere acknowledgment of the obligations you have laid me under by your long-continued kindness, as well as of the instruction and pleasure I have derived from your philosophical writings.*

*DUGALD STEWART.*

*June* 1810.

# ADVERTISEMENT.

THE state of my health having interrupted, for many months past, the continuation of my work on the Human Mind, I was induced to attempt, in the mean time, the easier task of preparing for the press a volume of Essays. I have not, however, abandoned the design which I ventured to announce eighteen years ago; and in the execution of which I have already made considerable progress. After thirty-eight years devoted to the various pursuits connected with my different academical situations, I now indulge the hope of enjoying, in a more retired scene, a short period of private study; and feel myself sufficiently warned by the approaching infirmities of age, not to delay any longer

my best exertions for the accomplishment of an undertaking, which I have hitherto prosecuted only at accidental and often distant intervals; but which I have always fondly imagined (whether justly or not others must determine) might, if carried into complete effect, be of some utility to the public.

*Kinneil-House,* 15*th June* 1810.

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## ERRATA.

Page vii, lines 12, 13, *delete* in the very next sentence
—— xxiii, line 17, *for* Σκεπτικὴ *read* Σκεπτικὴ
—— li, — 7, *for* celsus *read* celsius
—— 31, — 16, *for* decern *read* discern
—— 84, — 24, *for* as *read* or
—— 126, — 2, *after* remark *delete* (,)
—— 183, — 10, note, *for* se *read* ne
—— 245, — 5, *for* Encyclopedia *read* Encyclopedie
—— 298, — 3, note, *for* filii *read* fili
—— 389, — 14, 15, *for* illussion *read* illusions
—— 530, — 23, *for* this conclusion *read* these conclusions
—— 540, — 1, *for* clarus *read* claros
—— —, — 13, *for* donate *read* donata.
—— 567, — 24, *for* quadrangle signifies nothing, *read* round quadrangle signifies nothing,
—— 584, — 20, *for* instances *read* instance.

# PRELIMINARY DISSERTATION.

## CHAPTER FIRST.

THE chief aim of the following dissertation is, to correct some prevailing mistakes with respect to the Philosophy of the Human Mind. In the introduction to a former Work, I have enlarged, at considerable length, upon the same subject; but various publications which have since appeared, incline me to think, that, in resuming it here, I undertake a task not altogether superfluous.

Of the remarks which I am now to state, a few have a particular reference to the contents of this volume. Others are intended to clear the way for a different series of discussions, which I hope to be able, at some future period, to present to the public.

I. In the course of those speculations on the Mind, to which I have already referred, and with which, I trust, that my present readers are not altogether unacquainted, I have repeatedly had occasion to observe, that "as our notions "both of matter and of mind are merely *relative*;—as we "know the one only by such sensible qualities as extension, "figure, and solidity, and the other by such operations as "sensation, thought, and volition; we are certainly entit- "led to say, that matter and mind, *considered as Objects of* "*Human Study*, are essentially different; the science of the "former resting ultimately on phenomena exhibited to "our senses, that of the latter on phenomena of which we "are conscious. Instead, therefore, of objecting to the "scheme of materialism, that its conclusions are false, it "would be more accurate to say, that its aim is unphiloso- "phical. It proceeds on a misapprehension of the extent "and the limits of genuine science; the difficulty, which it "professes to remove, being manifestly placed beyond the reach of our inquiries. Surely, when we attempt to ex- "plain the nature of that principle, which feels, and thinks, "and wills, by saying, that it is a material substance, or "that it is the result of material organization, we impose on "ourselves by words; forgetting that matter, as well as "mind, is known to us by its qualities alone, and that we "are equally ignorant of the essence of either."

In the farther prosecution of the same argument, I have

attempted to shew, that the legitimate province of this department of philosophy extends no farther than to conclusions resting on the solid basis of observation and experiment; and I have, accordingly, in my own inquiries, aimed at nothing more, than to ascertain, in the first place, the Laws of our Constitution, *as far as they can be discovered by attention to the subjects of our consciousness;* and afterwards to apply these laws as principles for the synthetical explanation of the more complicated phenomena of the understanding. It is on this plan I have treated of the association of ideas, of memory, of imagination, and of various other intellectual powers; imitating, as far as I was able, in my reasonings, the example of those who are allowed to have cultivated the study of Natural Philosophy with the greatest success. The Physiological Theories which profess to explain how our different mental operations are produced by means of vibrations, and other changes in the state of the *sensorium,* if they are not altogether hypothetical and visionary, cannot be considered, even by their warmest advocates, as resting on the same evidence with those conclusions which are open to the examination of all men capable of exercising the power of Reflection; and, therefore, scientific distinctness requires, that these two different classes of propositions should not be confounded together under one common name. For my own part, I have no scruple to say, that I consider the physiological pro-

blem in question, as one of those which are likely to remain for ever among the *arcana* of nature; nor am I afraid of being contradicted by any competent and candid judge, how sanguine soever may be his hopes concerning the progress of future discovery, when I assert, that it has hitherto eluded completely all the efforts which have been made towards its solution. As to the metaphysical romances above alluded to, they appear to me, after all the support and illustration which they have received from the ingenuity of Hartley, of Priestley, and of Darwin, to be equally unscientific in the design, and uninteresting in the execution; destitute, at once, of the sober charms of Truth, and of those imposing attractions, which Fancy, when united to Taste, can lend to Fiction. In consequence of the unbounded praise which I have heard bestowed upon them, I have repeatedly begun the study of them anew, suspecting that I might be under the influence of some latent and undue prejudice against this new mode of philosophizing, so much in vogue at present in England; but notwithstanding the strong predilection which I have always felt for such pursuits, my labour has uniformly ended in a sentiment of regret, at the time and attention which I had misemployed in so hopeless and so ungrateful a task.

Mr Locke, although he occasionally indulges himself in hints and conjectures, somewhat analogous to those of Hart-

ley and Darwin, seems to have been perfectly aware how foreign such speculations are to the genuine Philosophy of the Human Mind. The following are his own words, in the second paragraph of the Introduction to his Essay :—" This, " therefore, being my purpose, to inquire into the original, " certainty, and extent of human knowledge; together with " the grounds and degrees of *belief, opinion,* and assent, I " shall not, at present, meddle with the physical considera- " tion of the mind, or trouble myself to examine, wherein its " essence consists, or by what motions of our spirits, or al- " teration of our bodies, we come to have any sensation by " our organs, or any ideas of our understandings; and whe- " ther these *ideas* do in their formation, any or all of them, " depend on matter or not. These are speculations, which, " however curious and entertaining, I shall decline, as lying " out of my way in the design I am now upon." It is much to be wished, that Mr Locke had adhered invariably to this wise resolution.

I flatter myself it will not be inferred, from the manner in which I have expressed myself with respect to the common theories of physiologists about the causes of the intellectual phenomena, that I entertain any doubt of the intimate connection which exists between these phenomena and the organization of the body. The great principle which I am anxious to inculcate, is, that all the theories which have

yet been offered on this subject, are entirely unsupported by proofs; and what is worse, are of such a kind, that it is neither possible to confirm nor to refute them, by an appeal to experiment or observation. That I was all along fully aware of the dependence, in our present state, of our mental operations on the sound condition of our corporeal frame, appears sufficiently from what I remarked, many years ago, concerning the *laws* of this connection between *mind* and *body*, as presenting one of the most interesting objects of examination connected with the theory of human nature *.

I have been induced to caution my Readers against the possibility of such a misapprehension of my meaning, by the following passage in a late publication: "What that affection of the brain is," (says Mr Belsham) "which, by the "constitution of human nature, causes Memory, we cannot "absolutely ascertain. The hypothesis of *Vibrations*, which "has already been explained, is the most probable. It is "trifling to object, that if the existence of impressions on the "brain could be proved, Memory would remain as unaccountable as before: all which this hypothesis pretends to, "is to advance a step in tracing the process of the connection between external objects and mental feelings."—"It "is curious to observe," (the same author continues) "that "Dr Reid, after starting several objections against the com-

* Philosophy of the Human Mind, pp. 11, 12, 3d ed.

" monly received hypotheses, is obliged to admit, that 'many " well-known facts lead us to conclude, that a certain con- " stitution or state of the brain is necessary to Memory."

On this passage I shall offer only two remarks. The first is, *that, notwithstanding* Mr Belsham's zeal for Hartley's Theory of Vibrations, he confesses explicitly, that " we can- " not absolutely ascertain, what that affection of the brain " is, which, by the constitution of human nature, causes " memory;" and that, " the theory of Vibrations, though " more probable than some others, is still but a hypothesis." Secondly, that Mr Belsham, after making this explicit acknowledgment, is nevertheless pleased to insinuate, in the very next sentence, that *all* who presume to object to this particular hypothesis, are bound by their own principles to assert, that memory has no *dependence whatever* on the state of the brain. Where the inconsistency lies in Dr Reid's admission, that a certain constitution or state of the brain is necessary to memory, after he had stated some objections against the commonly received theories, I am at a loss to discover. Indeed, I should be glad to know, what philosopher, ancient or modern, has ever yet asserted, that memory is not liable to be injured by such affections of the brain as are produced by intemperance, disease, old age, and other circumstances which disturb the bodily mechanism. The philosophical inference, however, from this concession is, *not* that the *hypothesis* of Dr Hartley, or the *hypothesis* of Mr

Belsham must necessarily be true; but that, laying aside all hypotheses, we should apply ourselves to collect such facts as may lead us, in due time, to the only satisfactory conclusions we have much chance of ever forming concerning the connection between mind and body—the discovery of some of the general laws by which this connection is regulated.

In offering these strictures on the physiological metaphysics of the present day, it is proper for me, at the same time, to observe, that I object to it merely as an idle waste of labour and ingenuity, on questions to which the human faculties are altogether incompetent; and not because I consider any of the theories, to which it has given birth, as standing in the way of my own doctrines. The facts which I wish to ascertain rest on their own proper evidence;—an evidence which would remain entire and unshaken, although a demonstration should be produced in favour of the *animal spirits* of Des Cartes, or of the *Vibrations* of Hartley; and which would not gain the slightest accession of strength, if both these hypotheses were to fall into the contempt they deserve. The circumstance which peculiarly characterizes the *inductive Science of the Mind* is, that it professes to abstain from all speculations concerning its nature and essence; confining the attention entirely to phenomena, which every individual has it in his power to examine for himself, who chooses to exercise the powers of his understanding. In this

respect, it differs equally in its scope, from the pneumatological discussions concerning the seat of the Soul, and the possibility or the impossibility of its bearing any relation to Space or to Time, which so long gave employment to the subtility of the schoolmen;—and from the physiological hypotheses which have made so much noise at a later period, concerning the mechanical causes on which its operations depend. Compared with the first, it differs, as the inquiries of Galileo concerning the laws of moving bodies differ from the disputes of the ancient sophists concerning the existence and the nature of motion. Compared with the other, the difference is analogous to what exists between the conclusions of Newton about the law of gravitation, and his *query* concerning the invisible *ether*, of which he supposed it might *possibly* be the effect.—It may be worth while to add, in passing, that the diversity of opinion among Newton's followers, with respect to the verisimilitude of this *query*, while they have unanimously acquiesced in the physical conclusions of their master, affords an instructive proof, how little the researches of inductive science are liable to be influenced by the wanderings of Imagination, in those regions which human reason is not permitted to explore. Whatever our opinion concerning the unknown physical or metaphysical cause of gravitation may be, our reasonings concerning the system of nature will be equally just, provided only we admit the general fact, that bodies tend to approach each

other with a force varying with their mutual distances, according to a certain law. The case is precisely similar with respect to those conclusions concerning the mind, to which we are fairly led by the method of Induction. They rest upon a firm and indisputable basis of their own; and (as I have elsewhere remarked) are equally compatible with the metaphysical creeds of the Materialist and of the Berkeleian *.

* The hypothesis which assumes the existence of a subtle fluid in the nerves, propagated by their means from the brain to the different parts of the body, is of great antiquity; and is certainly less repugnant to the general analogy of our frame, than that by which it has been supplanted. How very generally it once prevailed, may be inferred from the adoption into common speech of the phrase *animal spirits*, to denote that unknown cause "which gives vigour or cheerfulness to the mind;"—a phrase for which our language does not, at this day, afford a convenient substitute. The late Dr Alexander Monro (one of the most cautious and judicious of medical inquirers) speaks of it as a fact which appeared to him to be almost indisputable. "The existence of a liquid in the cavities of the nerves, is supported by little short "of demonstrative evidence." (See some observations of his, published by Cheselden in his Anatomy.).

The hypothesis of Vibrations first attracted public notice in the writings of Dr William Briggs. It was from him that Sir Isaac Newton derived his anatomical knowledge; along with which he appears plainly, from his Queries, to have imbibed also some of the physiological theories of his preceptor.

In the Monthly Review for 1808, I observe the following passage: "For the "partiality which he (Dr Cogan) shews to Dr Reid, we may easily account, as being "a just tribute to the ingenuity and industry of that writer, and to the numerous valu-"able observations which enrich his works, unconnected with *his crude hypothesis* "*on the subject of the Human Mind.*"

In what part of Dr Reid's writings is this *crude hypothesis* proposed?

II. Intimately connected with the physiological hypothesis of the Hartleian school, is their metaphysical theory of Association, from which single principle they boast to have explained synthetically all the phenomena of the mind. In Dr Priestley's Remarks on Reid's Inquiry, there is an attempt to turn into ridicule, by what the author calls a Table of Dr Reid's Instinctive Principles, the application of the Inductive Logic to these phenomena. How far this Table is faithfully extracted from Dr Reid's book, it is unnecessary for me to consider at present *. Supposing, for the sake of argument, that the *Twelve Principles* enumerated by Priestley had been actually stated by his antagonist as *instinctive principles*, or as *general laws of our nature*, it is difficult to see for what reason the enumeration should be regarded as absurd, or even as unphilosophical, after the explanation given by Reid himself of the sense in which he wished his conclusions to be understood.

"The most general phenomena we can reach, are what "we call Laws of Nature. So that the laws of nature are "nothing else but the most general facts relating to the "operations of nature, which include a great many particular "facts under them. And if, in any case, we should give the "name of a law of nature to a general phenomenon, which

* The reader will be enabled to form a judgment on this point, by the Note (**) at the end of this Volume.

" human industry shall afterwards trace to one more ge-
" neral, *there is no great harm done.* The most general as-
" sumes the name of a law of nature when it is discovered;
" and the less general is contained and comprehended in it *."

In another part of his work, he has introduced the same remark. " The labyrinth may be too intricate, and the
" thread too fine, to be traced through all its windings; but
" if we stop where we can trace it no farther, and secure the
" ground we have gained, *there is no harm done;* a quicker
" eye may in time trace it farther †."

In reply to these passages, Priestley observes, that " the
" suspicion that we are got to ultimate principles, necessarily
" checks all farther inquiry, and is therefore of great disser-
" vice in philosophy. Let Dr Reid (he continues) lay his
" hand upon his breast, and say, whether, after what he has
" written, he would not be exceedingly mortified to find it
" clearly proved, to the satisfaction of all the world, that all
" the instinctive principles in the preceding Table were
" really acquired; and that all of them were nothing more
" than so many different cases of the old and well-known
" principle of *Association of Ideas.*"

With respect to the probability of this supposition, I have

* Reid's Inquiry, p. 223, 3d ed. † P. 9.

nothing to add to what I have stated on the same head, in the Philosophy of the Human Mind; "that, in all the other "sciences, the progress of discovery has been gradual, from "the less general to the more general laws of nature; and "that it would be singular indeed, if, in *this* science, which "but a few years ago was confessedly in its infancy, and "which certainly labours under many disadvantages pecu-"liar to itself, a step should all at once be made to a single "principle, comprehending all the particular phenomena "which we know*."

As the order established in the intellectual world seems to be regulated by laws perfectly analogous to those which we trace among the phenomena of the material system; and as, in all our philosophical inquiries (to whatever subject they may relate) the progress of the mind is liable to be affected by the same tendency to a premature generalization, the following extract from an eminent chemical writer may contribute to illustrate the scope, and to confirm the justness of some of the foregoing reflections.

"Within the last fifteen or twenty years, several new "metals, and new earths, have been made known to the "world. The names that support these discoveries are re-

* Elements, &c. p. 398 (3d edition), where I have enlarged on this point at some length.

" spectable, and the experiments decisive. If we do not give " our assent to them, no single proposition in chemistry can " for a moment stand. But whether all these are really simple " substances, or compounds not yet resolved into their ele- " ments, is what the authors themselves cannot possibly assert; " nor would it, in the least, diminish the merit of their obser- " vations, if future experiments should prove them to have " been mistaken, as to the simplicity of these substances. This " remark should not be confined to later discoveries; it may " as justly be applied to those earths and metals with which " we have been long acquainted."—" In the dark ages of " chemistry, the object was to rival nature; and the sub- " stance which the adepts of those days were busied to cre- " ate, was universally allowed to be simple. In a more en- " lightened period, we have extended our inquiries, and " multiplied the number of the elements. The last task " will be to simplify; and, by a closer observation of nature, " to learn from what a small store of primitive materials, all " that we behold and wonder at was created *."

This analogy between the history of chemistry and that of the philosophy of the human mind, which has often struck myself in contrasting the views of the Alchemists with those

* Inquiries concerning the nature of a metallic substance, lately sold in London as a new Metal, under the title of *Palladium*. By Rich. Chenevix, Esq.

of Lavoisier and his followers, has acquired much additional value and importance in my estimation, since I had the pleasure to peruse a late work of M. De Gerando; in which I find, that the same analogy has presented itself to that most judicious philosopher, and has been applied by him to the same practical purpose, of exposing the false pretensions and premature generalizations of some modern metaphysicians.

"It required nothing less than the united splendour of the "discoveries brought to light by the new chemical school, "to tear the minds of men from the pursuit of *a simple and* "*primary element*; a pursuit renewed in every age with an "indefatigable perseverance, and always renewed in vain. "With what feelings of contempt would the physiologists "of former times have looked down on the chemists of the "present age, whose timid and circumscribed system admits "nearly forty different *principles* in the composition of bo- "dies! What a subject of ridicule would the new nomen- "clature have afforded to an Alchemist!"

"The Philosophy of Mind has its Alchemists also;—men "whose studies are directed to the pursuit of one single "principle, into which the whole science may be resolved; "and who flatter themselves with the hope of discovering

" the grand secret, by which the pure gold of Truth may " be produced at pleasure

Among these Alchemists in the science of mind, the first place is undoubtedly due to Dr Hartley, who not only attempts to account for all the phenomena of human nature, from the single principle of *Association*, combined with the *hypothetical* assumption of an invisible fluid or *ether*, producing Vibrations in the medullary substance of the brain and nerves; but indulges his imagination in anticipating an æra, " when future generations shall put all kinds of evidences " and inquiries into mathematical forms; reducing Aristotle's " ten categories, and Bishop Wilkins' forty *summa genera*, to " the head of Quantity alone, so as to make mathematics " and logic, natural history and civil history, natural philo- " sophy, and philosophy of all other kinds, coincide *omni ex* " *parte*." If I had never read another sentence of this author, I should have required no farther evidence of the unsoundness of his understanding.

It is, however, on such rash and unwarranted assertions as this, combined with the supposed comprehensiveness of his metaphysical views, that the peculiar merits of Hartley seem now to be chiefly rested by the more enlightened of his ad-

* De Gerando, Hist. des Systèmes, Tom. II. pp. 481, 482.

mirers. Most of these, at least whom I have happened to converse with, have spoken of his physiological doctrines as but of little value, compared with the wonders which he has accomplished by a skilful use of the Associating Principle. On this head, therefore, I must request the attention of my readers to a few short remarks.

III. Of the most celebrated theorists who have appeared since the time of Lord Bacon, by far the greater part have attempted to attract notice, by displaying their ingenuity in deducing, from some general principle or law, already acknowledged by philosophers, an immense variety of particular phenomena. For this purpose, they have frequently found themselves under a necessity of giving a false gloss to facts, and sometimes of totally misrepresenting them; a practice which has certainly contributed much to retard the progress of experimental knowledge; but which, at the same time, must be allowed (at least in Physics) to have, in some cases, prepared the way for sounder conclusions. The plan adopted by Hartley is very different from this, and incomparably more easy in the execution. The generalizations which he has attempted are merely *verbal;* deriving whatever speciousness they may possess, from the unprecedented latitude given to the meaning of common terms. After telling us, for example, that "all our internal feelings, except-" ing our sensations, may be called *ideas;*" and giving to the

word *Association* a corresponding vagueness in its import, he seems to have flattered himself, that he had resolved into one single law, all the various phenomena, both intellectual and moral, of the human mind. What advantage, either theoretical or practical, do we reap from this pretended discovery;—a discovery necessarily involved in the arbitrary definitions with which the author sets out? I must acknowledge, that I can perceive none:—while, on the other hand, I see clearly its necessary effect, by perverting ordinary language, to retard the progress of a science, which depends, more than any other, for its improvement, on the use of precise and definite expressions *.

With respect to the phrase *association of ideas*, which makes such a figure, not only in Hartley, but in most of the metaphysical writers whom England has since produced, I shall

* Under the title of *Association*, Hartley includes every connection which can possibly exist among our thoughts; whether the result of our natural constitution, or the effect of accidental circumstances, or the legitimate offspring of our rational powers. Even our assent to the proposition, that *twice two is four*, is (according to him) only a particular case of the same general law. "The cause that a person affirms the truth of the proposition, *twice two is four*, is the entire coincidence of the visible or tangible idea of twice two with that of four, as impressed upon the mind by various objects. We see everywhere, that twice two and four are only different names for the same impression. And it is mere *association* which appropriates the word truth, its definition, or its internal feeling, to this coincidence."

Hartley on Man, Vol. I. p. 325. 4th edit.

take this opportunity to remark, how very widely its present acceptation differs from that invariably annexed to it in Mr Locke's Essay. In his short chapter on this subject (one of the most valuable in the whole work), his observations relate entirely to "those connections of ideas that are owing to "*chance*; in consequence of which connections, ideas that, "in themselves, are not at *all a-kin*, come to be so united "in some men's minds, that it is very hard to separate "them; and the one no sooner, at any time, comes into the "understanding, but its Associate appears with it." His reason for dwelling on these, he tells us expressly, is, "that "those who have children, or the charge of their education, "may think it worth their while diligently to watch, and "carefully to prevent the undue connection of ideas in the "minds of young people. This (he adds) is the time most "susceptible of lasting impressions; and though those relating to the health of the body are, by discreet people, minded and fenced against; yet I am apt to doubt, that those "which relate more peculiarly to the mind, and terminate "in the understanding, or passions, have been much less "heeded than the thing deserves; nay, those relating purely to the understanding have, as I suspect, been by most "men wholly overlooked."

From these quotations, it is evident that Mr Locke meant to comprehend, under *the association of ideas*, those Associations

alone, which, for the sake of distinction, I have characterized, in my former work, by the epithet *casual.* To such as arise out of the nature and condition of Man (and which, in the following Essays, I generally denominate *Universal Associations*), Mr Locke gives the title of *Natural Connections*; observing, with regard to them, that "it is the office and "excellency of reason to trace them, and to hold them to-"gether in union." If his language on this head had been more closely imitated by writers of physical science, many of the errors and jargon of the objects of human knowledge. In estimating the merit of those who first proposed this arrangement, something, I suspect, may be fairly ascribed to accident; but that the arrangement is in itself agreeable to the views of the most enlightened and refined logic, appears indisputably from this obvious consideration, that the words Matter and Mind express the two great departments of nature which fall under our notice; and that, in the study of both, the only progress we are able to make, is by an accurate examination of particular phenomena, and a cautious reference of these to the general laws or rules under which they are comprehended. Accordingly, some modern writers, of the first eminence, have given their decided sanction to this old and almost forgotten classification, in preference to that which has obtained universally in modern Europe.

"The ancient Greek philosophy" (says Mr Smith) "was

neral acceptation with Mr Hume, as it seems to me to be that which is most agreeable to present use, and consequently the most likely to present itself to the generality of my readers; guarding them, at the same time, as far as possible, against confounding the two very different classes of *connections*, to which he applies indiscriminately this common title. As for the latitude of Hartley's phraseology, it is altogether incompatible with precise notions of our intellectual operations, or with a[illegible] concerning its nature, [illegible]gical reasoning [illegible]em of Physics *." which

Mr Locke, too, in the concluding chapter of his Essay, proposes, as what seemed to him the most general, as well as natural division of the objects of our understanding, an arrangement coinciding exactly with that of the ancients, as explained by Mr Smith in the foregoing passage. To the first branch of science he gives the name of Φυσικὴ; to the second, that of Πρακτικὴ; to the third, that of Σημειωτικὴ, or Λογικὴ; adding, with respect to the word φυσικὴ, (or natural philosophy) that he employs it to comprehend, not merely the knowledge of matter and body, but also of spirits; the end of this branch being bare speculative truth, and consequently every subject belonging to it, which affords a field of speculative study to the human faculties.

* Wealth of Nations, Vol. III, pp. 163, 166, 9th edit.

what I conceive to be its proper object and province; but some additional illustrations, of a historical nature, may perhaps contribute to place my argument in a stronger light than it is possible to do by any abstract reasoning.

IV. It is a circumstance not a little remarkable, that the Philosophy of the Mind, although in later times considered as a subject of purely metaphysical research, was classed among the br[illegible]sophers."—"Spirit [illegible] the ancient enumerati[illegible] comprises only the Supreme Being and the [illegible] "Soul, is surely as much included under the notion of na- "tural object, as body is; and is knowable to the philoso- "pher purely in the same way, by observation and experi- "ence*."

In what manner the philosophy of the human mind came to be considered as a branch of metaphysics, and to be clas-

* Philosophy of Rhetoric, Vol. I. p. 143 (1st edit.)—It were to be wished, that Locke and Campbell, in the passages quoted above, had made use of the word *mind* instead of *spirit*, which seems to imply a hypothesis concerning the *nature* or *essence* of the sentient or thinking principle, altogether unconnected with our conclusions concerning its phenomena and their general laws. For the same reason, I am disposed to object to the words *Pneumatology* and *Psychology*; the former of which was introduced by the schoolmen; and the latter, which appears to me equally exceptionable, has been sanctioned by the authority of some late writers of considerable note; in particular of Dr Campbell, and of Dr Beattie.

" divided into three great branches; physics, or natural " philosophy; ethics, or moral philosophy; and logic."— " This general division" (he adds) " seems perfectly agree- " able to the nature of things." Mr Smith afterwards observes, " that as the human mind, in whatever its essence " may be supposed to consist, is a part of the great system " of the universe, and a part, too, productive of the most im- " portant effects, whatever was taught in the ancient schools " of Greece, concer[illegible] made a part of the sys- " tem [illegible] no distinguishing title, Andronicus [illegible] prefixed the words, Τα μετα τα φυσικα, either to denote the place which they occupied in Aristotle's own arrangement, (immediately after the physics), or to point out that which it appeared to the Editor they ought to hold in the order of study.

Notwithstanding the miscellaneous nature of these books, the Peripatetics seem to have considered them as all belonging to one science; the great object of which they conceived to be, *first*, to treat of those attributes which are common to Matter and to Mind; *secondly*, of things separate from Matter; particularly of GOD, and of the subordinate Minds which they supposed to carry on the physical changes exhibited in the universe. A notion of Metaphysics nearly the same was adopted by the Peripatetics of the Christian church. They distinguished its two branches by the titles of Ontology and

To these authorities may be added that of Dr Campbell, who, after remarking, that "experience is the principal or-" gan of truth in all the branches of physiology," intimates, "that he employs this term to comprehend not merely na-" tural history, astronomy, geography, mechanics, optics, " hydrostatics, meteorology, medicine, chemistry, but also " natural theology and psychology, which" (he observes), " have been, in his opinion, most unnaturally disjoined from " physiology by philoso[illegible] Spirit (he adds), which " he[illegible] Ontology, which may safely be pro[illegible]man be the most idle and absurd speculation that ever emplo[illegible]ed the human faculties. Nor has the evil been yet reme[illegible]died by the contempt into which the schoolmen have fallen in more modern times. On the contrary, as their arrangement of the objects of Metaphysics is still very generally retained, the Philosophy of the Mind is not unfrequently understood, even by those who have a predilection for the study of it, as a speculation much more analogous to Ontology than to Physics; while, in the public opinion, notwithstanding the new aspect it begins to assume, in consequence of the lights struck out by Bacon, Locke, and their followers, it continues to share largely in that discredit, which has been justly incurred by the greater part of those discussions, to which, in common with it, the epithet *Metaphysical* is indiscriminately applied by the multitude.

sed with the frivolous sciences which are commonly included under the same name, is well known to all who are conversant with literary history. It may be proper, however, to mention here, for the information of some of my readers, that the word Metaphysics is of no older date than the publication of Aristotle's works by Andronicus of Rhodes, one of the learned men into whose hands the manuscripts of that philosopher fell, after they were brought by Sylla from Athens to Rome. To [illegible] books in these manuscripts, which had [illegible]ogy for the length of the preceding [illegible] to have, [illegible] as for some remarks which I now propose to offer, upon the arguments which have been alleged in opposition to its pretensions. To myself, I must own, that the more I reflect on the subject, the more close and striking does the [illegible]nalogy appear,

Natural Theology; the former relating to Being in general, the latter to GOD and to Angels. To these branches the schoolmen added the Philosophy of the Human Mind, as relating to an immaterial substance; distinguishing this last science by the title of Pneumatology.

From this arrangement of Natural Theology, and of the Philosophy of the Human Mind, they were not very likely to prosper, as they gradually came to be studied with the same spi[illegible] [illegible]nounced to

WHEN I first ventured to appear before the public as an author, I resolved that nothing should ever induce me to enter into any controversy in defence of my conclusions, but to leave them to stand or to fall by their own evidence. From the plan of inductive investigation which I was conscious of having steadily followed, as far as I was able, I knew, that whatever mistakes might be detected in the execution of my design, no such fatal consequences were to be dreaded to my general undertaking, as might have been justly apprehended, had I presented to the world a connected system, founded on gratuitous hypotheses, or on arbitrary definitions. The detections, on the contrary, of my occasional errors, would, I flattered myself, from the invariable consistency and harmony of truth, throw new lights on those inquiries which I had conducted with greater success; as the

I have been led into this detail, not from the most distant idea of proposing any alteration in that use of the words Metaphysics and Physics, which has now universally obtained, but merely to guard myself against the charge of affectation or singularity, when I so often recur in these pages to the analogy between the inductive science of Mind, and the inductive science of Matter. The attempt which has been made by some very ingenious writers of late, to dispute the claims of the former to so honourable an affinity, must plead my apol[redacted]sitionem discussion, as well [redacted]ODIS RES NUDAS ET APERTAS EXHIBE-" MUS, ut errores nostri notari et separari possint; atque etiam, " ut facilis et expedita sit laborum nostrorum continuatio."

As this indifference, however, about the fate of my particular doctrines, arose from a deep-rooted conviction, both of the importance of my subject, and of the soundness of my plan, it was impossible for me to be insensible to such criticisms as were directed against either of these two fundamental assumptions. Some criticisms of this description I had, from the first, anticipated; and I would not have failed to obviate them in the introduction to my former work, if I had not been afraid to expose myself to the imputation of prolixity, by conjuring up objections for the purpose of refuting them. I longed, therefore, for an opportunity of being able to state these objections in the less suspicious words of another; and still more in the words of some

## CHAPTER SECOND.

censures wh[illegible] self, are expressed with a delicacy wel[illegible] cere thanks, and are intermingled with many flattering e[illegible] pressions of regard from my unknown, but friendly critic:— and of the more general and weighty animadversions on the practical utility of my studies, I have but little reason to complain, when I consider, that they apply with equal force not only to such writers as Locke, Condillac, and Reid, but in a far greater degree, to the Father of Experimental Philosophy. How exactly those views of mine, which have, on this occasion, been called in question, coincide with the general spirit of the *Novum Organum*, will, I trust, appear from the following remarks; which will amount much less to a laboured defence of my own opinions, than to a correction of what I conceive to be a very mistaken representation of Lord Bacon's doctrines †.

* Edinburgh Review, Vol. III, p. 269, et seq.

† My desire to obviate the effect of these mis-statements must apologize for the

correction of a trifling mis-statement in an authentic history is often found, by completing an imperfect link, or reconciling a seeming contradiction, to dispel the doubts which hung over the more faithful and accurate details of the narrative.

In this hope, I was fortified by the following sentence of Lord Bacon, which I thought I might apply to myself without incurring the charge of presumption. "Nos autem, si quâ "in re vel male credidimus, vel obdormivimus et minùs at- "tendimus, vel defecimus in via et inquisitionem [illegible] "nihilo minùs [illegible] and succession of which we are gene- "rally unable to controul, and as to which we can do little "more than collect and record the laws by which they ap- "pear to be governed. These substances are not the object "of *experiment*, but of *observation*; and the knowledge we "may obtain, by carefully watching their variations, is of a

Latin extracts from Bacon, with which I am obliged to load a few pages of this Dissertation. I once intended to have translated them; but found myself quite unable to preserve the weighty and authoritative tone of the original. There is something, besides, in the *ipsissima verba* employed by Bacon, which every person, much conversant with his works, regards with a sort of religious reverence; and which, certainly, lays hold of the imagination and of the memory with peculiar facility and force. I wish, at the same time, most anxiously to see an English version of the Novum Organum, executed by some skilful hand, in order to bring it within the reach of a more numerous class of readers. I do not know a more acceptable service which any individual could render to philosophy; and the extreme difficulty of the task, would render it an undertaking worthy of the greatest talents.

writer, whose talents might contribute to draw the public attention to an argument, in which I conceived the credit of my favourite studies to be so peculiarly interested. For such an opportunity, I am indebted to a very able article in the Edinburgh Review; in replying to which I shall have occasion to obviate most of the objections which I had foreseen, as well as various others which, I must own, had never occurred to me *.

The censures which, in this article, fall personally on myself, are expressed with a delicacy well entitled to my sincere thanks, and are intermingled with many flattering expressions of regard from my unknown, but friendly critic:—and of the more general and weighty animadversions on the practical utility of my studies, I have but little reason to complain, when I consider, that they apply with equal force not only to such writers as Locke, Condillac, and Reid, but in a far greater degree, to the Father of Experimental Philosophy. How exactly those views of mine, which have, on this occasion, been called in question, coincide with the general spirit of the *Novum Organum*, will, I trust, appear from the following remarks; which will amount much less to a laboured defence of my own opinions, than to a correction of what I conceive to be a very mistaken representation of Lord Bacon's doctrines †.

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" Inductive philosophy," (we are told) " or that which " proceeds upon the careful observation of facts, may be " applied to two different classes of phenomena. The " first are those that can be made the subject of proper " experiment, where the substances are actually in our " power, and the judgment and artifice of the inquirer " can be effectually employed to arrange and combine them " in such a way as to disclose their most hidden properties " and relations. The other class of phenomena are those " that occur in substances that are placed altogether beyond " our reach, the order and succession of which we are gene- " rally unable to controul, and as to which we can do little " more than collect and record the laws by which they ap- " pear to be governed. These substances are not the object " of *experiment*, but of *observation*; and the knowledge we " may obtain, by carefully watching their variations, is of a

Latin extracts from Bacon, with which I am obliged to load a few pages of this Dissertation. I once intended to have translated them; but found myself quite unable to preserve the weighty and authoritative tone of the original. There is something, besides, in the *ipsissima verba* employed by Bacon, which every person, much conversant with his works, regards with a sort of religious reverence; and which, certainly, lays hold of the imagination and of the memory with peculiar facility and force. I wish, at the same time, most anxiously to see an English version of the Novum Organum, executed by some skilful hand, in order to bring it within the reach of a more numerous class of readers. I do not know a more acceptable service which any individual could render to philosophy; and the extreme difficulty of the task, would render it an undertaking worthy of the greatest talents.

" kind that does not directly increase the power which we " might otherwise have had over them. It seems evident, " however, that it is principally in the former of these de- " partments, or the *strict experimental philosophy*, that those " splendid improvements have been made, which have erect- " ed so vast a trophy to the prospective genius of Bacon. " The astronomy of Sir Isaac Newton is no exception to this " general remark; all that mere observation could do to de- " termine the movements of the heavenly bodies, had been " accomplished by the star-gazers who preceded him; and " the law of gravitation, which he afterwards applied to the " planetary system, was first calculated and ascertained by " *experiments* performed upon substances which were entirely " at his disposal.

" It will scarcely be denied either, that it is almost exclu- " sively to this department of experiment that Lord Bacon " has directed the attention of his followers. His fundamen- " tal maxim is, that *knowledge is power;* and the great pro- " blem which he constantly aims at resolving, is, in what " manner the nature of any substance or quality may, by " experiment, be so detected and ascertained, as to enable " us to manage it at our pleasure. The greater part of the " Novum Organum, accordingly, is taken up with rules and " examples for contriving and conducting experiments; and " the chief advantage which he seems to have expected from

" the progress of these inquiries, appears to be centered in " the enlargement of man's dominion over the material uni- " verse which he inhabits. To the mere observer, therefore, " his laws of philosophizing, except where they are prohibi- " tory laws, have but little application; and to such an in- " quirer, the rewards of his philosophy scarcely appear to " have been promised. It is evident, indeed, that no *direct* " utility can result from the most accurate observations of " occurrences which we cannot controul; and that, for the " uses to which such observations may afterwards be turned, " we are indebted, not so much to the observer, as to the " person who discovered the application. It also appears to " be pretty evident, that, in the art of observation itself, no " very great or fundamental improvement can be expected. " Vigilance and attention are all that can ever be required " in any observer; and though a talent for methodical ar- " rangement may facilitate to others the study of the facts " that have been collected, it does not appear how our know- " ledge of these facts can be increased, by any new method " of describing them. Facts that we are unable to modify " or direct, in short, can only be the objects of observation; " and observation can only inform us that they exist, and " that their succession appears to be governed by certain " general laws.

" In the proper experimental philosophy, every acquisition

" of knowledge is an increase of power; because the know-
" ledge is necessarily derived from some intentional disposi-
" tion of materials, which we may always command in the
" same manner. In the philosophy of observation, it is
" merely a gratification of our curiosity. By experiment,
" too, we generally acquire a pretty correct knowledge of the
" *causes* of the phenomena we produce, as we ourselves distri-
" bute and arrange the circumstances upon which they de-
" pend. In matters of mere observation, the assign-
" ment of causes must always be, in a good degree, conjec-
" tural, inasmuch as we have no means of separating the
" preceding phenomena, or deciding otherwise than by ana-
" logy, to which of them the succeeding event is to be attri-
" buted."

As the whole of this passage tends to depreciate the importance of a very large department of Physics, no less than of the science of Mind, the discussion to which it leads becomes interesting to Philosophers of every description; and, therefore, it is unnecessary for me to make any apology, either for the length of the quotation, or for that of the examination which I propose to bestow on it. It is sufficient for me to remind my readers, that, in the remarks which follow, I plead the cause not only of Locke and his followers, but of such *star-gazers* as Tycho-Brahe, Kepler, Galileo, and Copernicus.

That it is by means of *experiments*, judiciously conducted, that the greater part of the discoveries in modern physics have been made, I readily admit. Nay, I am satisfied, that it is by a skilful use of this great organ of investigation, much more than by any improvements in the art of observing the spontaneous appearances of the universe, that the physical inquiries of Bacon's followers are chiefly characterized, when contrasted with those of the ancient schools. The astronomical cycles handed down to us from the most remote antiquity; the immense treasure of facts with respect to natural history, preserved in the works of Aristotle and of Pliny; and the singularly accurate histories of the phenomena of disease, which some of the Greek physicians are allowed to have bequeathed to posterity, abundantly justify the remark which was long ago made by a medical writer, that "if the "ancients were not accustomed to interrogate Nature, they, "at least, listened to her with an unremitted attention *."

In farther illustration of the utility of *experiment*, it may be remarked, that in proportion as a particular science opens a field to address and invention, in thus extorting the secrets of Nature, the rate of its progress is subjected to human genius and industry. What is the great cause of the uncertainty in which medicine continues to be involved? Is it not, that, in addition to the difficulties which it has to struggle

* Van Doeveren.

with, in common with the other branches of physical knowledge, it depends, more than any of the rest, upon accident for its improvement. The *experimentum periculosum*, and *judicium difficile*, are complaints as old as the time of Hippocrates.

While, however, I make this concession in favour of *experiment*, as the most powerful organ we can employ in the study of Nature; and admit, in their fullest extent, the advantages peculiar to those sciences in which we can, at pleasure, avail ourselves of its aid; I must be allowed to add, that I am unable to perceive the slightest connection between the premises and the conclusion they have been employed to establish. The difference between experiment and observation, consists merely in the comparative rapidity with which they accomplish their discoveries; or rather in the comparative command we possess over them, as instruments for the investigation of truth. The discoveries of both, when they are actually effected, are so precisely of the same kind, that it may safely be affirmed, there is not a single proposition true of the one, which will not be found to hold equally with respect to the other. It ought to be remembered, too, that it is in those branches of knowledge, where there is least room for experiment, and where the laws of nature are only to be detected by cautiously collecting and combining a mul-

titude of casual observations, that the merits of the philosopher are the greatest, where he succeeds in his researches.

That the conclusions of the astronomical observer, with respect to the laws by which the phenomena of the heavens are regulated, contribute, in any degree, to extend the sphere of his power over the objects of his study, no *star-gazer*, so far as I know, has yet boasted. But have these conclusions had no effect in extending his power over that scene where he is himself destined to be the principal actor? Have they contributed nothing to the progress of chronology and of geography; or to the improvement of that art which, by guiding his course across the pathless ocean, has completed the empire of man over the globe? One thing, at least, is evident, that Newton's discovery of the law of Gravitation, notwithstanding the *experiments* which supplied him with some *data* essential to his results, has added nothing to the power of man, the utility of which does not resolve into the same general principle, with that of the *observations* of Tycho-Brahe, and of Kepler. The planetary system still remains as little subject to our controul as before; and all that we have gained is, that, by synthetical reasonings from the theory of gravitation, we have been enabled to ascertain various astronomical elements of the highest practical utility, with a precision which mere observation was incompetent to attain.

It is indeed true, "that for the uses to which astronomical "and all other observations may be turned, we are indebt- "ed, not so much to the observer, as to the person who dis- "covered the application." But is not the case exactly the same with the knowledge we derive *directly* from experiment; and what are the respects in which the mere Observer sinks below the level of the mere Empiric?

With regard to astronomical observations, it must be farther acknowledged, that they bestow on Man no *mechanical* power over the heavens, analogous to the command he has acquired over fire, water, steam, the strength of the lower animals, and various other physical agents. But this is owing chiefly to the distances and magnitudes of the objects to which the astronomer directs his attention; circumstances quite unconnected with any specific difference between the knowledge acquired by observation and by experiment. Indeed, in the case of the physical agents first mentioned, it may be fairly questioned, which of these two organs of discovery has had the principal share in pointing them out to the notice of mankind.

In compensation for the inability of the astronomer to controul those movements of which he studies the laws, he may boast, as I already hinted, of the immense accession of a more useful power which his discoveries have added to the human race, on the surface of their own planet. It would be

endless to enumerate all the practical uses to which his labours are subservient. It is sufficient for me to repeat an old, but very striking reflection, that the only accurate knowledge which Man possesses of the surface of the Earth, has been derived from the previous knowledge he had acquired of the phenomena of the Stars. Is it possible to produce a more apposite, or a more undeniable proof of the universality of Bacon's maxim, that "*knowledge is power*," than a fact which demonstrates the essential aid which man has derived, in asserting his dominion over this lower world, from a branch of science which seems, at first view, fitted only to gratify a speculative curiosity; and which, in its infancy, served to amuse the leisure of the Chaldean shepherd? To those who have imbibed the spirit of Bacon's philosophy, it is superfluous to add, that it was in this refined and enlarged sense of his aphorism, far more than in its obvious and partial application to the new resources which experiments have occasionally lent to the mechanician, that Bacon himself wished to be understood, when he so often repeats it in the same words, with an air of triumph, in the course of his writings.

Let us now attend to the application which is made of these preliminary considerations to the Human Mind. "The "science of Metaphysics (it is asserted) depends upon ob- "servation, and not upon experiment; and all reasonings

" upon Mind proceed accordingly upon a reference to that " general observation which all men are supposed to have " made, and not on any particular experiments, which are " known only to the inventor. The province of Philoso- " phy in this department, therefore, is the province of ob- " servation only; and in this department the greater part of " that code of laws, which Bacon has provided for the regu- " lation of experimental induction, is plainly without autho- " rity. *In Metaphysics, certainly knowledge is not power;* and " instead of producing new phenomena to elucidate the old, " by well-contrived and well-conducted experiments, the " most diligent inquirer can do no more than register and " arrange the appearances, which he can neither account for " nor controul."—

In proof of this, it is alleged, that " we feel, and perceive, " and remember, without any purpose or contrivance of " ours, and have evidently no power over the mechanism by " which those functions are performed. We may describe " and distinguish those operations of mind, indeed, with more " or less attention or exactness, but we cannot subject them " to experiment, nor alter their nature by any process of in- " vestigation. We cannot decompose our perceptions in a " crucible, nor divide our sensations with a prism; nor can " we, by art and contrivance, produce any combination of " thoughts or emotions, besides those with which all men are

" provided by nature. No metaphysician expects, by ana-
" lysis, to discover a new power, or to excite a new sensation
" in the mind, as a chemist discovers a new earth, or a new
" metal; nor can he hope, by any process of synthesis, to
" exhibit a mental combination, different from any that na-
" ture has produced in the minds of other persons."

So far as this reasoning proceeds merely on the alleged inferiority of observation to experiment, as a source of power, or of useful knowledge, I have nothing to add, in the way of refutation, to what I have already advanced. Supposing all the knowledge we possess of mind to be derived from observation solely, it would not therefore follow, that the Philosophy of Mind must necessarily yield to Physics in practical utility. The difficulty of the study would, indeed, appear proportionally greater; but no inference could fairly be drawn, from this circumstance, to depreciate the value of the conclusions to which it might lead.

But is it, indeed, true, in the full latitude of the critic's assertion, that " the science of Metaphysics *,"—(meaning by

* After what I have already said on the vagueness of the word Metaphysics, and the futility of most of the studies which are referred to that very comprehensive title, it is scarcely necessary for me to add, that, in controverting the position which has just been quoted, I would be understood to confine my remarks solely to *the induc-*

that phrase, the Philosophy of the Human Mind) "depends "upon observation, and not upon experiment?" Even, in the case of our *perceptions*, the most favourable by far for his purpose, which he could possibly have selected, this proposition seems to me altogether unfounded. We cannot, indeed, decompose them in a crucible, in the literal sense of these words; but is there no possibility of decomposing them by such experimental processes as are suited to the nature of the subject? Of this no better proof can be given than Berkeley's Theory of Vision, more particularly his analysis of the means by which experience enables us to judge of the distances and magnitudes of objects. It is, at least, *an attempt* towards an experimental decomposition of our perceptions; and, in my opinion (although I have always thought that a good deal is still wanting to render the theory completely satisfactory) a most successful, as well as original attempt, so far as it goes. Numberless illustrations of the same thing might be produced from the subsequent speculations of Smith, Jurin, Porterfield, Reid, and others, with respect to those phenomena of vision which are immediately connected with the Philosophy of the Mind. Nor is it to

*tive Philosophy of the Human Mind.* That this was the science which the writer had in his eye, when he asserted, that "metaphysics depend upon observation, and "not upon experiment," appears manifestly from the whole of the context.

this class of our perceptions alone, that the experimental researches of our predecessors have been confined. To draw the line between the original and acquired perceptions which we receive by some of our other senses, more especially by those of hearing and of feeling, is a problem equally difficult and interesting; and of which no pretended solution would, in the present times, attract one moment's notice, which rested on any other basis than that of experiment.

I have confined myself, in what I have now said, to the researches of inductive philosophy concerning our perceptions; because this is the instance which the critic himself has thought proper to fix upon. The extensive province, however, of experiment in the science of mind, will appear in an incomparably stronger light to those who shall follow out the subject, by observing the use which has been made of this organ of investigation, in analyzing the phenomena connected with some of our other intellectual powers;—the phenomena, for example, of Attention, of Association, of Habit in general, of Memory, of Imagination; and, above all, those which are connected with the use of Language, considered as an instrument of thought and of reasoning.

The whole of a Philosopher's life, indeed, if he spends it to any purpose, is one continued series of experiments on his own faculties and powers; and the superiority he possesses

over others, in a skilful application of them, arises chiefly from the general rules (never, perhaps, expressed *verbally* even to himself) which he has deduced from these experiments;—experiments, it must be granted, not carried on by such instruments as prisms or crucibles, but by an apparatus better suited to the intellectual laboratory which furnishes their materials. Of this remark I hope to be able to produce some new illustrations, in that part of the following Volume, in which I propose to examine the process by which the acquired power of Taste is gradually formed.

As to the minds of others, it is undoubtedly but seldom that we have the means of subjecting them to formal and premeditated experiments. But even here, many exceptions occur to the general assertion which I am now combating. What is the whole business of Education, when systematically and judiciously conducted, but a practical application of rules deduced from our own experiments, or from those of others, on the most effectual modes of developing and of cultivating the intellectual faculties and the moral principles? I lay but little stress, comparatively, on those rare, though inestimable opportunities of gratifying an experimental curiosity, which are presented by the Blind and the Deaf, when they are qualified to give a distinct account of their peculiar perceptions, feelings, and habits of thought; nor on such extraordinary cases as that of the young man couched by Che-

selden, whose simple and intelligent statement of what he experienced on his first introduction to the visible world, discovers powers of observation and of reflection, as well as of clear description, which do not appear to have been equalled in any of the similar instances which have since occurred.

To counterbalance the disadvantages which the Philosophy of Mind lies under, in consequence of its slender stock of experiments, made directly and intentionally on the minds of our fellow-creatures, Human Life exhibits to our observation a boundless variety, both of intellectual and moral phenomena; by a diligent study of which, we may ascertain almost every point that we could wish to investigate, if we had *experiments* at our command. The difference between observation and experiment, in *this* instance, considered as sources of knowledge, is merely *nominal*; amounting to nothing more than this, that the former presents spontaneously to a comprehensive and combining understanding, results exactly *similar* to those, which the latter would attempt to ascertain by a more easy and rapid process, if it possessed the opportunity. Hardly, indeed, can any experiment be imagined, which has not already been tried by the hand of Nature; displaying, in the infinite varieties of human genius and pursuits, the astonishingly diversified effects, resulting from the possible combinations of those elementary faculties

and principles, of which every man is conscious in himself. Savage society, and all the different modes of civilization ;—the different callings and professions of individuals, whether liberal or mechanical ;—the prejudiced clown ;—the factitious man of fashion ;—the varying phases of character from infancy to old age ;—the prodigies effected by human art in all the objects around us;—laws,—government,—commerce, —religion ;—but above all, the records of thought, preserved [redacted]volumes which fill our libraries ; what are they but *experiments*, by which Nature illustrates, for our instruction, on her own grand scale, the varied range of Man's intellectual faculties, and the omnipotence of Education in fashioning his mind ?

As to the remark, that " no metaphysician expects, by " analysis, to discover a new power, or to excite a new sen- " sation in the mind, as the chemist discovers a new earth " or a new metal," it is abundantly obvious, that it is no more applicable to the anatomy of the mind, than to the anatomy of the body. After all the researches of physiologists on this last subject, both in the way of observation and of experiment, no discovery has yet been made of a new organ, either of power or of pleasure, or even of the means of adding a cubit to the human stature ; but it does not therefore follow that these researches are useless. By enlarging his knowledge of his own internal structure, they increase

the *power of man* in that way in which alone they profess to increase it. They furnish him with resources for remedying many of the accidents to which his health and his life are liable; for recovering, in some cases, those active powers which disease has destroyed or impaired; and, in others, by giving sight to the blind, and hearing to the deaf, for awakening powers of perception which were dormant before. Nor must we overlook what they have contributed, in conjunction with the arts of the optician and of the mechanist, to extend the sphere of those senses, and to prolong their duration.

If we consider, in like manner, the practical purposes to which the anatomy of the Mind is subservient, we shall find the parallel infinitely to its advantage. What has Medicine yet effected in increasing the bodily powers of man, in remedying his diseases, or in lengthening life, which can bear a moment's comparison with the prodigies effected by Education, in invigorating his intellectual capacities; in forming his moral habits; in developing his sensitive principles; and in unlocking all the hidden sources of internal enjoyment? Nor let it be objected, that education is not a branch of the Philosophy of the Human Mind. So far as it is effectual and salutary, it is founded on those principles of our nature which have forced themselves on general observation, in consequence of the experience of ages. So far as it is inju-

dicious and hurtful, it proceeds upon speculative errors and prejudices, which juster views of the Philosophy of the Mind can alone correct. Would it not necessarily be rendered more systematical and enlightened, if the powers and faculties on which it operates, were more scientifically examined, and better understood? The medical art, it must be remembered, had made no inconsiderable progress, before anatomy was regarded as a necessary preparation for the study. It is disputed, whether Hippocrates himself ever dissected a human subject; and Galen is said to have undertaken a journey to Alexandria, merely to gratify his curiosity by the sight of a skeleton.

It is curious, that the objection which we are now considering to the Philosophy of the Mind, is the very same in substance with that which Socrates urged against the speculations of natural philosophers in his age. "He would ask," (says Xenophon) "concerning these busy inquirers into the "nature of such things as are only to be produced by a di-"vine power,—whether, as those artists who have been in-"structed in some art, believe they are able to practise it at "pleasure, so they, having found out the immediate *cause*, "believe they shall be able, for their own benefit, or that of "others, to produce winds and rain, the vicissitudes of time, "or the change of seasons? or if, indeed, altogether desti-

" tute of this hope, they could content themselves with such
" *fruitless* knowledge?

" As for himself, Man, and what related to Man, were the
" only subjects on which he chose to employ his inquiries
" and his conversation *.

I have quoted these sentences, chiefly as they afford me an opportunity of remarking, that, whereas the scepticism of modern Europe has been confined, in a great measure, to the Philosophy of Mind, that of antiquity was directed more particularly to the theories which pretended to explain the phenomena of the Material Universe. That Socrates, with all his zeal for the advancement of Moral Science, was a complete sceptic in what is now called Physics, appears sufficiently from the account given of his studies in the first chapter of the Memorabilia. Nor will this seem at all surprising to those who reflect on the unprofitable questions, about which (as we learn from the same authority) the inquiries of Natural Philosophers were then employed. After the physical discoveries, indeed, which have distinguished the two last centuries, the scepticism of this truly wise man is apt to strike us, at first sight, as altogether weak.

* Translation of the Memorabilia, by Mrs Fielding. For the rest of the passage (to which no version can do justice) I must refer to the original.

and puerile; but does not this very consideration afford to those, who now cultivate the inductive Philosophy of Mind, some ground of hope, that the day may yet come, when a juster estimate will be formed of the value of their labours?

It is not, however, on *future* contingencies that I will rest my present argument. Notwithstanding the obscurity and uncertainty which continue to involve various important questions connected with the theory of our internal frame, I do not scruple to contrast, as an organ of Human Power, and of Human Happiness, the Science of Mind, even in its present state of infancy, with the discoveries which have immortalized the names of Boyle and of Newton. Nor will this assertion seem extravagant or paradoxical, if the following profound observations of Bacon be compared with the value of that gift which he himself bequeathed to posterity.

"Non abs re fuerit, tria hominum ambitionis genera et "quasi gradus distinguere. Primum eorum, qui propriam "potentiam in patria sua amplificare cupiunt; quod genus "vulgare est et degener. Secundum eorum, qui patriæ potentiam et imperium inter humanum genus amplificare nitun-"tur: illud plus certe habet dignitatis, cupiditatis haud "minus. Quod si quis humani generis ipsius potentiam et "imperium in rerum universitatem instaurare et amplificare "conetur; ea proculdubio ambitio (si modo ita vocanda sit)

" reliquis et sanior est et augustior. Hominis autem imperi-
" um in res, in solis artibus et scientiis ponitur. NATURÆ
" ENIM NON IMPERATUR, NISI PARENDO."

" Præterea, si unius alicujus particularis inventi utilitas ita
" homines affecerit, ut eum, qui genus humanum universum
" beneficio aliquo devincire potuerit, homine majorem puta-
" verint, quanto celsus videbitur, tale aliquid invenire, per
" quod alia omnia expedite inveniri possint."

In order to depreciate the philosophical merits of Bacon, I have sometimes heard an enumeration attempted, of important discoveries which have been made, since the publication of the Novum Organum, by individuals who never read that work; nor, in all probability, were aware of its existence. The alleged fact, on which this argument proceeds, I am not disposed to controvert; for, granting it in its fullest extent, little stress will be laid on it by those who have duly attended to the slow and indirect process by which the influence of such writings as those of Bacon must necessarily descend, from the higher to the lower classes of intellectual workmen. Their immediate operation cannot possibly extend beyond the narrow circle of inquirers, who, to an enlarged and unprejudiced understanding, add the rare capacity of entering into abstract and general reasonings. In the investigations of this small and select class of readers, the logical rules

to which these reasonings lead, are, in the first instance, exemplified; and when the example has once been set, it may be successfully copied by thousands who never heard of the rules, nor are capable of comprehending the principles on which they are founded. It is in this manner that the paramount influence of the Philosophy of Mind, on the subordinate sciences and arts, escapes the notice of those who are unable to look beyond palpable and proximate causes; and who forget that, in the intellectual as well as in the material world, whatever is accomplished by the division and distribution of labour, must be ultimately referred to the comprehensive design of the mechanist, who planned and combined the whole.

Of this disposition to detract from Bacon's fame, I certainly do not mean to accuse the learned and ingenious writer who has given occasion to these strictures, and who acknowledges fairly, the mighty influence which Bacon's works have had on the subsequent progress of *experimental* science. I must own, however, that, in my opinion, he would have reasoned more consistently, if he had asserted the contrary; for, after this admission, how is it possible that he should dispute the practical utility of the Philosophy of the Mind; the improvement of which is manifestly the great object of Bacon, from the beginning to the end of his work? If, in reply to this, it should be argued, that the Philosophy

of the Mind means something different from what is commonly called Metaphysics; I have only to express my complete assent to the justness of the distinction; and my regret, that, after the repeated attempts I have made to illustrate it, an advantage should, in one or two passages of this article, have been taken of the vagueness of popular language, to discredit, by means of an obnoxious appellation, one of the most important, and, at the same time, one of the most neglected departments of human knowledge.

To what branch of science Lord Bacon himself conceived the speculations in the *Novum Organum* to belong, appears from various passages which it contains. One of these is more particularly remarkable, as it explicitly guards the readers of that work against inferring, from the multiplicity of physical illustrations with which it abounds, that his object is to instruct them with respect to the phenomena of matter, when his real aim is to deduce, from the laws of the Human Mind, such logical rules as may guide them in the search of truth.

" Illud vero monendum, nos in hoc nostro organo tractare
" logicam, non philosophiam. Sed cum logica nostra doceat
" intellectum et erudiat ad hoc, ut non tenuibus mentis
" quasi claviculis, rerum abstracta captet et prenset (ut logi-
" ca vulgaris); sed naturam revera persecet, et corporum

" virtutes et actus, eorumque leges in materia determinatas
" inveniat; ita ut non solum *ex natura mentis*, sed *ex natura*
" *rerum* quoque hæc scientia emanet: mirari non est, si
" ubique naturalibus contemplationibus et experimentis, ad
" exempla artis nostræ, conspersa fuerit et illustrata."

It is perfectly manifest from the context, that by *philosophy* Lord Bacon here means the particular branches of the study of Nature, in opposition to that science (one of the most important departments of the philosophy of the mind) which professes to comprehend them all in its survey, and to furnish the means of their advancement. To this science he elsewhere gives the name of *Philosophia Prima;* pointing out, by a happy and beautiful allusion, its pre-eminence among the rest, both in dignity and in practical importance.

" Alius error est, quod post singulas scientias et artes suas
" in classes distributas, mox a plerisque universali rerum
" cognitioni et *philosophiæ primæ* renunciatur; quod quidem
" profectui doctrinarum inimicissimum est. Prospectationes
" fiunt a turribus, aut locis præaltis, et impossibile est, ut
" quis exploret remotiores interioresque scientiæ alicujus
" partes, si stet super plano ejusdem scientiæ, neque altioris
" scientiæ veluti speculum conscendat."

That Bacon's philosophy, too, was constantly present to

my thoughts, when I have dwelt, in any of my publications, on the importance of the philosophy of the human mind, must be evident to all who have read them with attention. In proof of this, I shall only appeal, at present, to the illustrations I have given of the utility of the study, in the introduction to my former volume. The "sanguine and ex-"travagant expectations" which I am accused of having formed, with respect to the advantages likely to result from its future improvement, will be found, from every page of my book, to resolve chiefly into a conviction (founded on the astonishing success with which the labours of Bacon's followers have been attended), that much may yet be done to direct and accelerate the progress of the mind, by completing that undertaking to which he gave a beginning. When we reflect on the low state in which even physical science, strictly so called, was at the period when he attempted to lay down the rules according to which philosophical inquiries ought to be prosecuted, this conviction cannot well appear either very unnatural or very romantic.

But it is not merely as an *organon* for the advancement of physics, that the science of mind is valuable. It furnishes, in itself, a field of study, equally interesting and important; and far more intimately connected than is commonly supposed, with all the arts which contribute to the stability, to the ornament, and to the happiness of civilized society.

How far this assertion is agreeable to Bacon's own views; or whether it be true, as has been affirmed, that "the chief "advantage which he expected from his inquiries, appears "to have been centered in the enlargement of man's "dominion over the material universe,"—can be decided only by an appeal to his writings. Whatever opinion we may adopt on this point, it must be granted on both sides, not only that, in the occasional passages where he touches on the science of mind, his observations are just and profound, but that the whole of his philosophical works form one continued exemplification of the plan on which this study ought to be conducted.—Here we meet with no hypothesis concerning the essence of the mind, or the nature of its connection with our bodily organization; but with a few important conclusions concerning the human understanding, obtained by a cautious induction from those *phenomena of thought*, which every man may ascertain by reflecting on the subjects of his own consciousness. Although it should be contended, therefore, that the advancement of the philosophy of mind was but a subordinate object in Bacon's general plan, it cannot possibly be disputed, that it is to his singularly just views on the subject, that we are indebted for all the scientific aids we have derived from his genius.

Whether Bacon himself considered the utility of his *Organum* as exclusively confined to inquiries relating to the mate-

rial universe, and had no view to its application in guiding our analytical researches concerning the intellectual faculties or active principles of the mind, may be judged of from his own words.

"Etiam *dubitabit* quispiam potius quam objiciet; utrum "nos de naturali tantum philosophia, an etiam de scientiis "reliquis, logicis, ethicis, politicis, secundum viam nostram "perficiendis loquamur. At nos certe de universis hæc, quæ "dicta sunt, intelligimus: Atque quemadmodum vulgaris lo- "gica, quæ regit res per syllogismum, non tantum ad Natu- "rales, sed ad omnes scientias pertinet; ita et nostra, quæ "procedit per inductionem, omnia complectitur. Tam enim "historiam et tabulas inveniendi conficimus de *ira, metu,* et "*verecundia,* et similibus; ac etiam de exemplis rerum civi- "lium; nec minus de motibus mentalibus *memoriæ, composi-* "*tionis et divisionis, judicii,* et reliquorum; quam de *calido,* et "*frigido,* aut *luce,* aut *vegetatione,* aut similibus."

The effects which Bacon's writings have hitherto produced, have indeed been far more conspicuous in physics than in the science of mind. Even here, however, they have been great and most important, as well as in some collateral branches of knowledge (such as natural jurisprudence, political economy, criticism, and morals) which spring up from the same root, or rather which are branches of that tree of

which the science of mind is the trunk. Of the truth of this assertion I shall afterwards have occasion to produce abundant evidence.

That our conclusions concerning the principles and laws of the human constitution differ, in many respects, from discoveries in physics, I do not deny; nor will I enter into a verbal dispute with those who maintain that the word *discovery* is in no sense applicable to these conclusions. It is sufficient for my purpose to remark, that this criticism, admitting it to be just, ought not, in any respect, to lower our estimate of their practical value, or of the merits of the writers to whom we owe them. Among Bacon's *Aphorisms* there is not one single sentence which contains *a discovery*, as that word has been lately defined; but what discoveries can vie with them in the accessions which they have brought to the happiness and to the power of the human race * ?

In farther prosecution of the argument against the import-

* *D'Alembert* was one of the first who insisted on this nicety in the use of the word *discovery*. In one passage he seems to exclude the possibility of *discoveries* from mathematics as well as metaphysics; and what is still more curious, to do so, on account of the *perfect evidence* which it is possible for us to attain in *both* these sciences.

" La réflexion, en partant des idées directes, peut suivre deux routes différentes: " ou elle compare les qualités des corps, et alors, d'abstractions en abstractions, elle " arrive aux notions les plus simples, celles de *quantités*; ou bien elle se reporte sur

ance of the science of mind, it has been observed, that "from "the very nature of the subject, it seems necessarily to follow, "that all men must be practically familiar with all the func- "tions and qualities of their minds, and with almost all the "laws by which they appear to be governed. Every one "knows exactly what it is to perceive and to feel, to remem- "ber, imagine, and believe; and though he may not always "apply the words that denote these operations with perfect "propriety, it is not possible to suppose that any one is ig- "norant of the things. Even those laws of thought or con- "nections of mental operations that are not so commonly "stated in words, appear to be universally known, and are "found to regulate the practice of those who never thought "of announcing them in an abstract proposition. A man "who never heard it asserted, that memory depends upon "attention, yet attends with uncommon care to any thing "that he wishes to remember; and accounts for his for- "getfulness, by acknowledging that he had paid no atten- "tion. A groom who never heard of the association of "ideas, feeds the young war-horse to the sound of the "drum; and the unphilosophical artists that tame ele-

"ces opérations même qui ont servi à la formation des idées, et remonte ainsi aux ele- "mens de la *métaphysique*. Ces deux sciences, la *geometrie* et la *métaphysique*, "quoiqu' analogues entr'elles, sont donc les deux termes extrêmes et opposés de nos "connoissances. Entr'elles est un monde immense, *l'abime des incertitudes et le "théatre des découvertes*."—Disc. Prelim. à l'Encyclop.

" phants and dancing-dogs, proceed upon the same obvious " and admitted principle."

This argument, I suspect, leads a little too far for the purpose of its author, inasmuch as it concludes still more forcibly (in consequence of the greater familiarity of the subject,) against Physics, strictly so called, than against the Science of Mind. The Savage, who never heard of the accelerating force of gravity, yet knows how to add to the momentum of of his missile weapons, by gaining an eminence; though a stranger to Newton's third law of motion, he applies it to its practical use, when he sets his canoe afloat, by pushing with it a pole against the shore:—in the use of his sling, he illustrates, with equal success, the doctrine of centrifugal forces, as he exemplifies (without any knowledge of the experiments of Robins) the principle of the rifle-barrel in feathering his arrow. The same groom who, " in feeding his young war " horse to the sound of the drum," has nothing to learn from Locke or from Hume concerning the laws of association, might boast, with far greater reason, that, without having looked into Borelli, he can train that animal to his various paces; and that, when he exercises him with the *longe*, he exhibits an experimental illustration of the centrifugal force, and of the centre of gravity, which was known in the riding-school long before their theories were unfolded in the Principia of Newton. Even the operations of the animal which

is the subject of his discipline, seem to involve an acquaintance with the same physical laws, when we attend to the mathematical accuracy with which he adapts the obliquity of his body to the rate of his circular speed. In both cases (in that of the man as well as of the brute) this practical knowledge is obtruded on the organs of external sense by the hand of nature herself: but it is not on that account the less useful to evolve the general theorems which are thus embodied with their particular applications; and to combine them in a systematical and scientific form, for our own instruction and that of others. Does it detract from the value of the theory of pneumatics to remark, that the same effects of a *vacuum*, and of the elasticity and pressure of the air, which afford an explanation of its most curious phenomena, are recognized in an instinctive process coëval with the first breath which we draw; and exemplified in the mouth of every babe and suckling?

When one of the unphilosophical artists of the *Circus* gallops his round, standing or dancing upon his horse's back, and tosses up an orange, which he is afterwards to receive on the point of a sword, he presents to us an exemplification of some physical truths, connected with the most refined conclusions of science. To say nothing of the centrifugal power, or of the centre of gravity, the single experiment of the

orange, affords an illustration of the composition of forces, so apposite and so palpable, that it would have furnished Copernicus with a triumphant reply to the cavils of his adversaries against the motion of the earth.

What an immense stock of scientific principles lie buried amid the details of manufactures and of arts! We may judge of this from an acknowledgment of Mr Boyle, that he had learned more by frequenting the shops of tradesmen than from all the volumes he had read.

How many beautiful exemplifications of the most sublime mechanical truths are every day exhibited by the most illiterate of the people! Nay, how great is the superiority, in point of promptitude and address, which some of these unphilosophical artists display, in circumstances where the most profound mechanician would be totally at a loss how to avail himself of his knowledge! The philosopher himself, the first time he is at sea, cannot cease to wonder, when he observes the theorems hitherto associated in his mind with mathematical diagrams, exemplified by every ship-boy on board; nor need he be ashamed to acknowledge his own incompetency to apply these theorems to their practical use, while he attempts to handle the ropes, or to steer the vessel. Still less, however, would he have reason, *on this account*,

to conclude, that, in studying the composition and resolution of forces, he had made an acquisition of no intrinsic value.

The proper inference to be drawn from these and similar considerations, is so admirably expressed in the following passage, that I shall transcribe it without any comment. It is quoted from an obscure author by Sir Joshua Reynolds, and placed by him in the front of his academical discourses, as an apology for his own disquisitions concerning some of the principles of painting.

" Omnia fere quæ præceptis continentur ab ingeniosis ho-
" minibus fiunt; sed casu quodam magis quam scientia.
" Ideoque doctrina et animadversio adhibenda est, ut ea
" quæ interdum sine ratione nobis occurrunt, semper in nos-
" trâ potestate sint; et quoties res postulaverit, a nobis ex
" præparato adhibeantur."

It is hardly necessary for me to remark how applicable this observation is to those very doctrines of the science of Mind which have given rise to this discussion. They who consider how much of the business of education resolves into a skilful management of *attention* and of *association*, will not be disposed to deny, that something might still be done, by awakening the vigilance of parents and preceptors

to these important principles of our frame, to render this task more systematical in its aim, and less doubtful in its success. Have no conclusions with respect to them been yet ascertained, of which a better practical use might be made to develope or to increase the mental energies of man; to promote his moral improvement; and to shed on his understanding that pure and steady light, without which *reason* itself can do but little, either to exalt his views, or to secure his happiness? Even the very curious facts here appealed to, with respect to the education of the war-horse and of the elephant, only afford additional proofs of the universality of the proposition, "that knowledge is power." They demonstrate, that the empire of man over the brute force of the lower animals is proportioned, not to his physical strength, but to the knowledge he possesses of their respective constitutions. They form indeed a most beautiful and instructive comment on Bacon's maxim, that "*nature is to be subdued only by obeying* "*her laws*;" and might almost be quoted as apologues for the moral lesson they may convey to the guardians of youth, and to the rulers of nations.

It must indeed be granted, that, in the best works which have yet appeared on the science of mind, the mere refutation of scholastic errors occupies a large and melancholy space. Accordingly, it has been mentioned, with an air of triumph, as a fact which, since the time of Reid, "seems

" now to be admitted with regard to *perception*, and some of " the other primary functions of mind; that philosophy can " be of no use to us, and that the profoundest reasonings lead " us back to the creed, and to the ignorance of the vulgar." The reflection is undoubtedly just, if by *philosophy* be here meant the theory of perception, which prevailed universally before the time of Reid. But I must be allowed to refuse *my* assent to the statement, if it is to be understood as calling in question the utility of that philosophy by which this theory was exploded, after having reigned in the schools for more than two thousand years, and bewildered, not more than a century ago, the speculations of Locke, of Clarke, and of Newton. In order to prepare the way for the mechanical inquiries of the moderns, it was necessary to begin with exposing the futility of the scholastic explanations of phenomena, by *occult qualities*, and *Nature's horror of a void*. After the darkness in which every theory relating to the study of mind has been so long involved, by means of hypotheses consecrated by time, and interwoven with the inmost texture of language, some preliminary labour, in like manner, may be expected to be necessarily employed in clearing away the metaphysical rubbish of the ancients, and of the middle ages; and it is a circumstance highly honourable to the sagacity and zeal, both of Locke and of Reid, that they have devoted to this ungrateful, but indispensable task, so large a portion of their writings. What the latter of these philosophers has said con-

cerning the doctrine of his illustrious predecessor on the subject of *definitions*, may be applied to various other parts of the Essay on Human Understanding, as well as to many discussions which occur in his own publications; that "it is valuable, *not* so much because it enlarges our knowledge, as "because it makes us sensible of our ignorance; and shews "that a great part of what speculative men have admired as "profound philosophy, is only a darkening of knowledge by "words without understanding."

Nor must it be forgotten, that it is on this very hypothesis concerning perception, which has been successfully exploded by Reid, that the scepticism of Hume, concerning the existence both of matter and of mind, rests fundamentally. Has this scepticism had no effect in unsettling the opinions of mankind? or granting (as I believe will not be disputed) that the effect has been great and extensive, shall we deny the practical utility of disentangling human reason from such a labyrinth?

After all, it is not on this or similar articles of the science of Mind, that I myself am inclined to lay any great stress in this part of my argument. The points to which I wish chiefly to draw my readers' attention, are the intimate connection between this science and the general conduct of the understanding; and its obvious tendency, by facilitating

the analysis of whatever casual combinations the fancy may have formed, to dissolve the charm of those associations, against which the most conclusive arguments spend their force in vain.

I have always been convinced, that it was a fundamental error of Aristotle (in which he has been followed by almost every logical writer since his time) to confine his views entirely to reasoning or the discursive faculty, instead of aiming at the improvement of our nature in all its various parts.—Granting, however, for a moment, that this very limited idea of the object of their study was to be adopted, a more comprehensive survey of our faculties and powers was necessary than they appear to have suspected; for it is in corners of our frame which seem, on a superficial view, to have the least connection with our speculative opinions, that the sources of our most dangerous errors will be found to lurk. It is sufficient for me to mention here, the *Association of Ideas*; *Imagination*; *Imitation*; the use of *Language as the great Instrument of Thought*; and the *Artificial Habits of Judging*, imposed by the principles and manners in which we have been educated.

If this remark be well founded, it obviously follows, that, in order to prepare the way for a just and comprehensive system of Logic, a previous survey of our nature, considered

as one great whole, is indispensably requisite. To establish this fundamental principle, and to exemplify it in some of its practical applications, was one of the main objects I had in view, when I first entered upon my inquiries into the Human Mind; and I am not without hopes, that if my original design shall ever be completed, the imperfect sketch I have presumed to attempt, will be regarded, by competent judges, as no inconsiderable step towards the accomplishment of this great undertaking by some abler hand.

If my health and leisure allow me to put in writing some speculations which have long been familiar to my own thoughts, I shall endeavour to place the defects of our common logical systems in a still stronger light, by considering them in their application to the fundamental doctrines of Ethics; and more particularly, by examining how far, in researches of this sort, our moral feelings or emotions are entitled to consideration; checking, on the one hand, our speculative reasonings, when they lead to conclusions at which our nature revolts; and, on the other, sanctioning those decisions of the understanding, in favour of which the head and the heart unite their suffrages.

According to the prevailing maxims of modern philosophy, so little regard is paid to feeling and sentiment in matters of *reasoning*, that, instead of being understood to sanc-

tion or confirm the intellectual judgments with which they accord, they are very generally supposed to cast a shade of suspicion on every conclusion with which they blend the slightest tincture of sensibility or enthusiasm.

The prosecution of this idea will, if I do not much deceive myself, open some new views with respect to the *Logic of Morals;* and I am induced to suggest it here, in the hopes of directing the curiosity of some of my readers to an inquiry, which, I am persuaded, will lead them to conclusions deeply interesting to their own happiness.

As to Logic in general, according to my idea of it, it is an art yet in its infancy, and to the future advancement of which it is no more possible to fix a limit, than to the future progress of human knowledge. The aphorism of Lord Bacon applies, in this instance, with peculiar force. "Certo "sciant homines, artes inveniendi solidas et veras adolescere "et incrementa sumere cum ipsis inventis." In the mean time, it is the duty of all who devote themselves to scientific pursuits, to treasure up carefully, as materials to be collected and arranged afterwards by others, whatever general rules or methods may have occurred to them in the course of their studies. Even at present, numberless scattered lights might be gathered from the labours of our predecessors, both ancient and modern; nor would it perhaps be possible to sup-

ply a *desideratum* of greater value to philosophy, than to concentrate these dispersed rays, and to throw them on the regions which are yet to be explored *. From such a concentration much aid might be expected, both in directing the studies of others, and in the conduct of our own understanding; and it is chiefly on this slow, but continued accession to our stock of logical principles, arising from a systematical accumulation, at proper intervals of time, of individual contributions, that I rest my hopes of the farther advancement of that science in after ages. To speak, in the actual state of the world, of a complete system of logic (if by that word is meant any thing different from the logic of the schools), betrays an inattention to the object at which it aims, and to the progressive career of the human mind; but above all, it betrays an overweening estimate of the little which logicians have hitherto done, when compared with the magnitude of the task which they have left to their successors.

It was not, however, with a view to the advancement of logic alone, that I was led to engage in these inquiries. My first and leading aim was to take as comprehensive a survey

* To those who may turn their attention to the Logic of Mathematical Science, many invaluable hints may be collected from the works of D'Alembert, and from the preliminary discourses prefixed by some of his countrymen to their Mathematical Works.

as possible of the human constitution, in order to shew how limited our common plans of education are, when compared with the manifold powers both of intellect and of enjoyment by which Nature has distinguished our species. The cultivation of *reason*, with a view to the investigation of truth, is only one of the means, although one of the most *essential* means, towards the improvement and happiness of the individual; and it is merely on account of its high comparative importance in this respect, that I so often recur to it in the prosecution of my undertaking. The two last Essays which I have printed at the end of this Volume, will, I hope, be useful in illustrating my general idea.

I have been insensibly led into a much longer detail than I intended, about my future plans. I should be sorry if any of my readers should ascribe this prolixity to an idle egotism. Had I enjoyed a more unbroken leisure, my design would have been many years ago completed, as far as the measure of my abilities enabled me. I still look forward, though with hopes much less sanguine than I once indulged, to the prosecution of my task; and if (as is more than probable) these hopes shall be disappointed, it will afford me some satisfaction, to have left behind me this memorial, slight as it is, of what I had meditated.

I have only to repeat once more, before the close of this

Dissertation, that the correction of one single prejudice has often been attended with consequences more important and extensive than could be produced by any positive accession to the stock of our scientific information. Such is the condition of man, that a great part of a philosopher's life must necessarily be spent, not in enlarging the circle of his knowledge, but in unlearning the errors of the crowd, and the pretended wisdom of the schools; and that the most substantial benefit he can bestow on his fellow-creatures, as well as the noblest species of Power to which he can aspire, is to impart to others the lights he has struck out by his meditations, and to encourage human reason, by his example, to assert its liberty. To what did the *discoveries* made by Luther amount, but to a detection of the impostures of the Romish church, and of absurdities sanctioned by the authority of Aristotle? Yet, how vast the space which is filled by his name in the subsequent history of Europe! and how proud his rank among the benefactors of mankind! I am doubtful if Bacon himself did so much by the logical rules he gave for guiding the inquiries of his followers, as by the resolution with which he inspired them to abandon the beaten path of their predecessors, and to make excursions into regions untrodden before; or if any of his suggestions concerning the plan of experimenting, can be compared in value to his classification and illustration of the various prejudices or *idols* which mislead us from the pure worship of Truth. If the ambition

of Aristotle has been compared, in the vastness of its aim, and the plenitude of its success, (and who can say that it has been compared unjustly?) to that of his Royal Pupil who conquered the world; why undervalue the efforts of those who first raised the standard of revolt against his universal and undisputed despotism? Speedily after the death of Alexander, the Macedonian empire was dismembered among his principal officers. The empire founded by the philosopher continued one and undivided for the period of two thousand years; and, even at this day, fallen as it is from its former grandeur, a few faithful and devoted veterans, shut up in its remaining fortresses, still bid proud defiance, in their master's name, to all the arrayed strength of Human Reason. In consequence of this slow and gradual emancipation of the Mind, the means by which the final result has been accomplished, attract the notice only of the reflecting inquirer; resembling in their silent, but irresistible operation, the latent and imperceptible influence of the roots, which, by insinuating themselves into the crevices of an ancient edifice, prepare its infallible ruin, ages before its fall; or that of the apparently inert moisture, which is concealed in the fissures of a rock, when enabled, by the expansive force of congelation, to rend asunder its mass, or to heave it from its basis.

As it is seldom, in such instances, easy to trace to particular individuals what has resulted from their exertions, with the

same precision with which, in physics or mechanics, we refer to their respective inventors the *steam-engine* or the *thunder-rod*, it is not surprising, that the attention of the multitude should be so little attracted to the intellectual dominion of superior minds over the moral world; but the observer must be blind indeed, who does not perceive the vastness of the scale on which speculative principles, both right and wrong, have operated on the present condition of mankind; or who does not now feel and acknowledge, how deeply the morals and the happiness of private life, as well as the order of political society, are involved in the final issue of the contest between [redacted]se philosophy.

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In selecting the subjects of the Essays contained in the First Part of this volume, I have had a view chiefly to the correction of some mistaken opinions concerning the origin of our Knowledge (or, to use the more common phraseology, concerning the origin of our Ideas) which, as they are naturally suggested by certain figurative modes of speaking, sanctioned by the highest authorities, are apt to warp the judgment in studying the most elementary principles of abstract science. I have touched slightly on the same question in one of the sections of my former work; where the doctrine maintained with respect to it coincides exactly with that which

it is now my object to establish by a more ample discussion. At that time, I did not imagine that it differed so widely from the current maxims of the learned, as I have since found from various later publications; and accordingly, (as the point in dispute is intimately connected with almost every other question relating to the human mind) I have availed myself of the present opportunity to throw upon it some additional light, before resuming my analysis of the Intellectual Powers. With this view, I have been led to canvass, pretty freely, the doctrines not only of my predecessors, but of several of my contemporaries; and to engage in various arguments, which, however unconnected they may appear in a table of contents, will be all found, upon examination, to bear upon the same conclusion. I flatter myself, therefore, that those who may take the trouble to follow the train of thought which has led me from one Essay to another, will discover in this part of my book a greater degree of unity, than its title-page seems at first to promise.

The Essays which fill up the rest of the volume have no necessary dependence on the disquisitions to which they are subjoined; and may perhaps be read with some interest by readers who have little relish for scholastic controversy. The choice, however, even of these, was not altogether arbitrary; as, I trust, will appear evident to such as may honour the whole series with an attentive perusal.

Of the speculations with respect to the origin of our ideas, the greater part were committed to writing, for the first time, during the course of the last summer and winter; the materials of some of them being supplied by very imperfect hints, noted down at different periods of my life. The business of composition was begun at a time when I had recourse to it occasionally as a refuge from other thoughts; and has been carried on under circumstances, which, I doubt not, will incline those to whom they are known, to judge of the execution with some degree of indulgence.

# PHILOSOPHICAL ESSAYS.

## PART FIRST.

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## *PART FIRST.*

## ESSAY FIRST.

### ON LOCKE'S ACCOUNT OF THE SOURCES OF HUMAN KNOWLEDGE, AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE DOCTRINES OF SOME OF HIS SUCCESSORS.

### CHAPTER FIRST.

#### INTRODUCTORY OBSERVATIONS.

In speculating concerning any of the intellectual phenomena, it is of essential importance for us constantly to recollect, that, as our knowledge of the material world is derived entirely from our external senses, so all our knowledge of the human mind is derived from consciousness. As to the blind or the deaf, no words can convey the notions of particular colours, or of particular sounds; so to a being who had never been conscious of sensation, memory, imagination, pleasure,

pain, hope, fear, love, hatred, no intelligible description could be given of the import of these terms. They all express simple ideas or notions, which are perfectly familiar to every person who is able to turn his thoughts inwards, and which we never fail to involve in obscurity when we attempt to define them *.

The habits of inattention which all men contract, in their early years, to the operations of their own minds, have been pointed out, by various writers, as the most powerful of all obstacles to the progress of our inquiries concerning the theory of human nature. These habits, it has also been remarked, are to be conquered only by the most persevering industry in accustoming the thoughts to turn themselves at pleasure to the phenomena of this internal world; an effort by no means easy to any individual, and, to a large proportion of mankind, almost impracticable. "Magni est ingenii" (says Cicero) "revocare mentem à sensibus, et cogitationem à consuetudine abducere."—The observation, as thus expressed, is perhaps somewhat exceptionable; inasmuch as the power which Cicero describes has but little connection with *Genius* in the ordinary acceptation of that word;—but it cannot be denied, that it implies a capacity of patient and abstracted meditation, which does not fall to the lot of many.

* See Note (A.)

To this power of directing the attention steadily and accurately to the phenomena of thought, Mr Locke and his followers have very properly given the name of *Reflection*. It bears precisely the same relation to *Consciousness* which *Observation* does to *Perception*; the former supplying us with the facts which form the only solid basis of the science of mind, as we are indebted to the latter for the ground-work of the whole fabric of natural philosophy

With respect to the exercise of reflection, the following precept of an old-fashioned writer is so judicious, and the caution it suggests of so great moment to us in the inquiries on which we are about to enter, that I shall make no apology for introducing it here, although not more immediately connected with the subject of the present essay, than with those of all the others contained in this volume.

* The French language affords no single word to express consciousness, but *conscience*; a word which is also frequently employed as synonimous with the moral sense. Thus it is equally agreeable to the usage of the most correct writers to say, *l'homme a la conscience de sa liberté*; and to speak of *un homme de conscience*, in the English acceptation of that phrase. Hence an occasional indistinctness in the reasonings of some of the best French metaphysicians. It has probably been with a view to its correction, that so much use has been made lately of the circumlocutions, *le sens intime*, *le sentiment interieur*; phrases which appear to me to be still more exceptionable than the word for which they have been substituted.

In general, the English language has a decided superiority over the French in the precision of its metaphysical phraseology.—A few exceptions to this remark might perhaps be mentioned, but I do not recollect any of much importance.

"When I speak" (says Crousaz, in his Art of Thinking,) "of desire, contentment, trouble, apprehension, doubt, certainty; of affirming, denying, approving, blaming;—I pronounce words, the meaning of which I distinctly understand; and yet I do not represent the things spoken of under any image or corporeal form. While the intellect, however, is thus busy about its own phenomena, the imagination is also at work in presenting its analogical theories; but so far from aiding us, it only misleads our steps, and retards our progress. Would you know what thought is?—It is precisely that which passes within you when you think: Stop but here, and you are sufficiently informed. But the imagination, eager to proceed farther, would gratify our curiosity by comparing it to fire, to vapour, or to other active and subtile principles in the material world. And to what can all this tend, but to divert our attention from what thought is, and to fix it upon what it is not?"

The belief which accompanies consciousness, as to the *present existence* of its appropriate phenomena, has been commonly considered as much less obnoxious to cavil, than any of the other principles which philosophers are accustomed to assume as self-evident, in the formation of their metaphysical systems. No doubts on this head have yet been suggested

by any philosopher, how sceptical soever; even by those who have called in question the existence both of mind and of matter:—And yet the fact is, that it rests on no foundation more solid than our belief of the existence of external objects; or our belief, that other men possess intellectual powers and faculties similar to those of which we are conscious in ourselves. In all these cases, the only account that can be given of our belief is, that it forms a necessary part of our constitution; against which metaphysicians may easily argue so as to perplex the judgment, but of which it is impossible for us to divest ourselves for a moment, when we are called on to employ our reason, either in the business of life, or in the pursuits of science. While we are under the influence of our appetites, passions, or affections, or even of a strong speculative curiosity, all those difficulties which bewildered us in the solitude of the closet vanish before the essential principles of the human frame.

According to the common doctrine of our best philosophers, it is by the evidence of *consciousness* we are assured that we ourselves exist. The proposition, however, when thus stated, is not accurately true; for our own existence is not a direct or immediate object of consciousness, in the strict and logical meaning of that term. We are conscious of sensation, thought, desire, volition; but we are not conscious of the existence of mind itself; nor would it be possible

for us to arrive at the knowledge of it (supposing us to be created in the full possession of all the intellectual *capacities* that belong to human nature) if no impression were ever to be made on our external senses. The moment that, in consequence of such an impression, a sensation is excited, we learn two facts at once;—the existence of the sensation, and our own existence as sentient beings:—in other words, the very first exercise of my consciousness necessarily implies a belief, not only of the present existence of what is felt, but of the present existence of *that* which feels and thinks; or (to employ plainer language) the present existence of that being which I denote by the words *I* and *myself*. Of these facts, however, it is the former alone of which we can properly be said to be conscious, agreeably to the rigorous interpretation of the expression. The latter is made known to us by a suggestion of the understanding *consequent* on the sensation, but so intimately *connected* with it, that it is not surprising that our belief of both should be generally referred to the same origin.

If this distinction be just, the celebrated enthymeme of *Des Cartes, Cogito ergo sum,* does not deserve *all* the ridicule bestowed on it by those writers who have represented the author as attempting to demonstrate his own existence by a process of reasoning. To me it seems more probable, that he meant chiefly to direct the attention of his readers to a

circumstance which must be allowed to be not unworthy of notice in the history of the human mind;—the impossibility of our ever having learned the fact of our own existence, without some sensation being excited in the mind, to awaken the faculty of thinking *

As the belief of our *present existence* necessarily accompanies every act of consciousness, so, from a comparison of the sensations and thoughts of which we are *now* conscious, with those of which we recollect to have been conscious formerly, we are impressed with an irresistible conviction of our *personal identity*. Notwithstanding the strange difficulties that have been raised upon the subject, I cannot conceive any conviction more complete than this, nor any truth more intelligible to all, whose understandings have not been perplexed by metaphysical speculations. The objections founded on the change of substance in certain material objects to which we continue to apply the same name, are plainly not applicable to the question concerning the identity of the same person, or of the same thinking being; inasmuch as the words

* After looking again into the *Meditations* of Des Cartes, I am doubtful if I have not carried my apology for him a little farther than his own words will justify. I am still of opinion, however, that it was the remark which I have ascribed to him, that first led him into this train of thought.

*sameness* and *identity* are here used in different senses. Of the meaning of these words when applied to persons, I confess I am not able to give a logical definition; but neither can I define sensation, memory, volition, nor even existence*; and if any one should bring himself by this and other scholastic subtilties to conclude, that he has no interest in making provision for to-morrow, because *personality is not a permanent but a transient thing*, I can think of no argument to convince him of his error.

But although it is by consciousness and memory that the sameness of our being is ascertained to ourselves, it is by no means correct to say with Locke, that *consciousness constitutes personal identity*;—a doctrine which, as Butler justly remarks, "involves, as an obvious consequence, that a person has not "existed a single moment, nor done one action but what he "can remember; indeed none but what he reflects upon*."— "One should really think it self-evident" (as the same author further remarks) "that consciousness of personal identity pre- "supposes, and therefore cannot constitute personal identity, "any more than knowledge in any other case constitutes "those truths which are its own objects."—The previous existence of the *truths* is manifestly implied in the very supposition of their being *objects* of knowledge.

* See the dissertation on personal identity, subjoined to Butler's Analogy.

While, however, I assent completely to the substance of these acute and important strictures upon Locke's doctrine, I think it necessary for me to observe, that the language of Butler himself is far from being unexceptionable. He speaks of *our consciousness of personal identity*; whereas it must appear evident, upon a moment's reflection, even to those who acquiesce in the common statement which ascribes *immediately* to consciousness, our belief of our *present existence*,—that our belief of our *personal identity* presupposes, over and above this knowledge, the exercise of *memory*, and the idea of *time*.

The importance of attending carefully to the distinction between the phenomena which are the *immediate objects* of consciousness, and the concomitant notions and truths which are *suggested* to our thoughts by these phenomena, will appear from the considerations to be stated in the next chapter; in following which, however, I must request my readers to remember, that the distinction becomes important merely from the palpable refutation it affords of the prevailing theory concerning the origin of our knowledge; and not from any difference between the two classes of truths, in point of evidence.

## CHAPTER SECOND.

### INCONSISTENCY OF OUR CONCLUSIONS IN THE FOREGOING CHAPTER WITH LOCKE'S ACCOUNT OF THE ORIGIN OF OUR KNOWLEDGE.

It was already observed, that it is from consciousness, or rather from reflection, that we derive all our notions of the faculties and operations of the mind; and that, in analysing these, we must lay our account with arriving, sooner or later, at certain simple notions or ideas, which we have no means of conveying to others, but by teaching those to whom our reasonings are addressed, how to direct their attention with accuracy to what passes within them. These mental phenomena form the direct and appropriate subjects of consciousness; and, indeed, the *only* direct and appropriate subjects of consciousness, in the strict acceptation of that word.

It must not, however, be concluded from this, that the proper subjects of consciousness (when the phrase is *thus* un-

derstood) comprehend all the simple notions or ideas about which the science of mind is conversant; far less (as some philosophers have imagined) that they comprehend all the elements into which human knowledge may, in the last result, be analysed. Not to mention such notions as those of extension and figure, (both of which are inseparable concomitants of some of our external perceptions, and which certainly bear no *resemblance* to any thing of which we are conscious within ourselves,) there is a great variety of others so connected with our different intellectual faculties, that the exercise of the faculty may be justly regarded as a condition indispensably necessary to account for the first origin of the notion. Thus, by a mind destitute of the faculty of *memory*, neither the ideas of *time*, nor of *motion*, nor of *personal identity*, could possibly have been formed; ideas which are confessedly among the most familiar of all those we possess, and which cannot be traced immediately to *consciousness*, by any effort of logical subtilty. In like manner, without the faculty of *abstraction*, we never could have formed the idea of *number*; nor of *lines*, *surfaces*, *and solids*, as they are considered by the mathematician; nor would it have been possible for us to comprehend the meaning of such words as *classes* or *assortments*, or indeed of any one of the grammatical *parts of speech*, but proper names. Without the power of *reason* or *understanding*, it is no less evident, that no comment could have helped us to unriddle the import of the words, *truth*, *certainty*, *probability*,

*theorem, premises, conclusion;* nor of any one of those which express the various sorts of *relation* which fall under our knowledge. In such cases, all that can be said is, that the exercise of a particular faculty furnishes the *occasion* on which certain simple notions are, by the laws of our constitution, presented to our thoughts; nor does it seem possible for us to trace the origin of a particular notion any farther, than to ascertain what the nature of the *occasion* was, which, in the first instance, introduced it to our acquaintance.

The conclusions we thus form concerning the origin of our knowledge, constitute what may be properly called the *First Chapter* of the natural history of the human mind. They constitute, at the same time, the only solid basis of a rational logic; of that part of logic, more especially, which relates to the theory of evidence. In the order of investigation, however, they necessarily *presuppose* such an analysis of the faculties of the mind as I have attempted in another work;—a consideration of which I do not know that any logical writer has been hitherto aware; and which I must request my readers carefully to attend to, before they pass a judgment on the plan I have followed in the arrangment of my philosophical speculations.

If the foregoing remarks be well-founded, they are fatal to a fundamental principle of Locke's philosophy, which has

been assumed by most of his successors as a demonstrated truth; and which, under a form somewhat disguised, has served to Hume as the basis of all his sceptical theories. It appears to me, that the doctrines of both these eminent authors, with respect to the origin of our ideas, resolve into the supposition, that *consciousness* is exclusively the source of all our knowledge. Their language, indeed, particularly that of Locke, seems to imply the contrary; but that this was really their opinion, may, with certainty, be inferred from their own comments. My reasons for saying so, I shall endeavour to explain as clearly and concisely as I can.

"Let us suppose" (says Locke) "the mind to be, as we "say, white paper, void of all characters, without any ideas: "How comes it to be furnished? Whence comes it by that "vast store which the busy and boundless fancy of man has "painted on it, with an almost endless variety? Whence has "it all the materials of reason and knowledge? To this I an-"swer in a word, from *experience*: In *that* all our knowledge "is founded, and from *that* it ultimately derives itself. Our "observation, employed either about external sensible ob-"jects, or about the internal operations of our minds, per-"ceived and reflected on by ourselves, is that which supplies "our understanding with all the materials for thinking. "These two are the fountains of knowledge from whence all "the ideas we have, or can naturally have, do spring."

" First, our senses, conversant about particular sensible ob-
" jects, do convey into the mind several distinct perceptions of
" things, according to those various ways wherein those ob-
" jects do affect them: And thus we come by those ideas
" we have of *yellow, white, heat, cold, soft, hard, bitter, sweet,*
" and all those which we call sensible qualities; which, when
" I say the senses convey into the mind, I mean, they, from
" external objects convey into the mind what produces there
" those perceptions. This great source of most of the ideas
" we have, depending wholly upon our senses, and derived
" by them to the understanding, I call SENSATION.

" Secondly, the other fountain from which experience
" furnisheth the understanding with ideas, is *the perception* of*
" *the operations of our own minds within us,* as it is employed
" about the ideas it has got; which operations, when the
" soul comes to reflect on and consider, do furnish the un-
" derstanding with another set of ideas, which could not be
" had from things without; and such are *perception, thinking,*
" *doubting, believing, reasoning, willing,* and all the different
" actings of our own minds; which we, being conscious of,
" and observing in ourselves, do from these receive into our
" understandings as distinct ideas, as we do from bodies af-
" fecting our senses. This source of ideas every man has

* For *perception* read *conciousness.*

" wholly in himself: And though it be not sense, as having " nothing to do with external objects, yet it is very like it, " and might properly enough be called internal sense. But " as I call the other sensation, so I call this REFLECTION; " the ideas it affords being such only as the mind gets by " reflecting on its own operations within itself.——These " two, I say, viz. external material things, as the objects of " sensation, and the operations of our own minds within, as " the objects of reflection, are to me the only originals from " whence all our ideas take their beginnings*."

" When the understanding is once stored with these " simple ideas, it has the power to repeat, compare, and unite " them, even to an almost infinite variety, and so can make " at pleasure new complex ideas.—But it is not in the " power of the most exalted wit, or enlarged understanding, " by any quickness or variety of thoughts, to invent or frame " one new simple idea in the mind, not taken in by the ways " before-mentioned: Nor can any force of the understand- " ing destroy those that are there. The dominion of man, " in this little world of his own understanding, being much " the same, as it is in the great world of visible things; " wherein his power, however managed by art and skill, " reaches no farther than to compound or divide the mate-

* Locke's Essay, Book ii. Chap. i. § 2, 3, &c.

" rials that are made to his hand, but can do nothing " towards the making the least particle of new matter, or " destroying one atom of what is already in being *."

Thus far there seems to be little reprehensible in Locke's statement, as it might be fairly interpreted (notwithstanding some unguarded expressions) as implying nothing more than this, that the first *occasions* on which the mind is led to exercise its various faculties, and to acquire the simple notions which form the elements of all its knowledge, are furnished either by impressions made on our external senses, or by the phenomena of sensation and thought of which we are conscious. In *this sense* of the words, I have, in a former work, not only expressed my assent to Mr Locke's doctrine, but have admitted as correct, the generalization of it adopted by most of his present followers ;—" that the first *occasions* " on which our various faculties are exercised, and the ele- " ments of all our knowledge acquired, may be traced ulti- " mately to our intercourse with sensible objects." This generalization, indeed, is an obvious and necessary consequence of the proposition as stated by Locke; the mind being unquestionably, in the first instance, awakened to the exercise of consciousness and reflection by impressions from without †.

* Locke's Essay, Book 2. Chap ii. § 2.

† See Philosophy of the Human Mind, Chap. i. Sect. 4. which I must beg leave

The comments, however, which Locke has introduced on this cardinal principle of his system, in different parts of his Essay, prove beyond a doubt that he intended it to convey a great deal more than is implied in the interpretation of it which has just been given; and that, according to the meaning he annexed to his words, sensation and reflection are not merely affirmed to furnish the *occasions which suggest to the understanding* the various simple or elementary modifications of thought to which he gives the name of simple Ideas; but to furnish the mind directly and immediately with these ideas, in the obvious and literal sense of the expression;—insomuch, that there is not a simple idea in the mind which is not either the appropriate subject of consciousness, (such as the ideas which the mind forms of its own operations,)—or a *copy* of some quality perceived by our external senses. It appears farther, that Locke conceived these *copies*, or *images*, to be the immediate objects of thought, all our information about the material world being obtained by their intervention: And it was for this reason, I before asserted, that his fundamental principle resolves into the supposition, that *consciousness is exclusively the source of all our knowledge**.

to recommend to the careful perusal of such of my readers as are at all aware of the importance of this discussion.

* A remark, the same in substance with this, is made by Dr Reid in the conclusion

That I may not be suspected of doing Locke any injustice on this occasion, I must quote a few passages in his own words.

" The next thing to be considered is, how bodies produce " ideas in us, and that is manifestly *by impulse*, the only way " we can conceive bodies to operate in."

" If, then, external objects be not united to our minds, " when they produce ideas in it; and yet we perceive these " original qualities in such of them as singly fall under our " senses, 'tis evident, that some motion must be thence con- " tinued by our nerves or animal spirits, or by some parts of " our bodies to the brain, or the seat of sensation, there to " produce in our minds the particular ideas we have of " them. And since the extension, figure, number, and mo- " tion of bodies of an observable bigness, may be perceived " at a distance by the sight, 'tis evident, some singly imper- " ceptible bodies must come from them to the eyes, and

of his Inquiry. " When it is asserted, that all our notions are either ideas of sen- " sation, or ideas of reflection, the plain English of this is, that mankind neither do, " nor can think of any thing, but of the operations of their own minds."—*Inquiry, &c. p.* 376, *(3d Edition).*

In some places, Locke speaks of the ideas of material things as being *in the brain;* but his general mode of expression supposes them to be *in the mind;* and consequently the immediate objects of consciousness.

" thereby convey to the brain some motion which produces " these ideas which we have of them in us *."

A few sentences after, Mr Locke, having previously stated the distinction between the primary and the secondary qualities of matter, proceeds thus: " From whence I think " it easy to draw this observation, that the ideas of primary " qualities of bodies are *resemblances* of them, and their *pat-* " *terns* do really exist in the bodies themselves; but the ideas " produced in us by these secondary qualities have no resem- " blance of them at all †."

What notion Mr Locke annexed to the word *resemblance*, when applied to our ideas of primary qualities, may be best learned by the account he gives of the difference between them and our ideas of secondary qualities, in the paragraph immediately following. " Flame is denominated hot and " light ‡; snow, white, and cold; and manna, white and " sweet; from the ideas they produce in us: which quali- " ties are commonly thought to be the same in those bodies " that those ideas are in us, *the one the perfect resemblance of* " *the other, as they are in a mirror;* and it would by most

* Locke's Essay, Book ii. Chap. viii. § 11. and 12.

† § 15.—The instances mentioned by Locke of primary qualities are, solidity, extension, figure, motion, or rest, and number.

‡ For light read luminous.

" men be judged very extravagant, if one should say other-
" wise."

" I pretend not" (says the same author in a subsequent chapter) " to teach, but to inquire; and therefore, cannot " but confess here again, that external and internal sensation " are the only passages that I can find of knowledge to the " understanding. These alone, as far as I can discover, " are the windows by which light is let into this dark room. " For methinks the understanding is not much unlike a " closet, wholly shut from light, with only some little open-
" ings left, to let in external visible resemblances, or ideas " of things without; would the pictures coming into a dark " room but stay there, and lie so orderly as to be found " upon occasion, it would very much resemble the under-
" standing of a man, in reference to all objects of sight, and " the ideas of them *."

I have been induced to multiply these quotations, as some writers have alleged, that an undue advantage has been taken of the unguarded use which Locke has made in them of the word *resemblance*; which, it has been asserted, he could not possibly mean to be understood in its literal sense †. On

* Locke, Book 2. Chap. xi. § 17.

† See Priestley's Examination of Reid, &c. p. 28. et seq.

this point I must leave my readers to judge from his own language; remarking only, that if this language be considered as at all metaphorical or figurative, the most important inferences, drawn both by himself and his successors, from his celebrated theory concerning the origin of our ideas, amount to nothing better than a play upon words.

For my own part, I can see no good reason for supposing that Locke did *not* believe that our ideas of primary qualities are really resemblances or copies of these qualities, when we know for certain that, till our own times, this has been the universal doctrine of the schools, from Aristotle downwards. Even Leibnitz himself, while he rejected the supposition of these ideas coming into the mind from without, expresses no doubt of their resemblance to the archetypes which they enable us to think of. The soul he considered as a *living mirror* of the whole universe; possessing within itself confused or imperfect ideas of all the modifications of things external, whether present, past, or to come: that is to say, he retained that part of the scholastic doctrine which is the most palpably absurd and unintelligible; the supposition, that we can think of nothing, unless either the original or the copy be actually *in the mind*, and the immediate subject of consciousness. The truth is, that all these philosophers have been misled by a vain anxiety to explain the incomprehensible causes of the phenomena of which we are conscious, in

the simple acts of thinking, perceiving, and knowing; and they seem all to have imagined that they had advanced a certain length in solving these problems, when they conjectured, that in every act of thought, there exists some *image* or *idea* in the mind, distinct from the mind itself; by the intermediation of which its intercourse is carried on with things remote or absent. The chief difference among their systems has turned on this, that whereas many have supposed the mind to have been originally provided with a certain portion of its destined furniture, independently of any intercourse with the material world; the prevailing opinion, since Locke's time has been, that all our simple ideas, excepting those which the power of reflection collects from the phenomena of thought, are images or representations of certain external archetypes with which our different organs of sense are conversant; and that, out of these materials, thus treasured up in the repository of the understanding, all the possible objects of human knowledge are manufactured. "What "inconsistency!" (might Voltaire well exclaim)—"We "know not how the earth produces a blade of grass; or *how* "*the bones grow in the womb of her who is with child;* and "yet we would persuade ourselves that we understand the "nature and generation of our ideas*."

* Selon Leibnitz, l'ame est une concentration, un miroir vivant de tout l'univers, qui a en soi toutes les idées confuses de toutes les modifications de ce monde présentes, passées, et futures, &c. &c.

Chose etrange, nous ne savons pas, comment la terre produit un brin d'herbe,

It is however a matter of comparatively little consequence to ascertain, what were the notions which Locke himself annexed to his words, if it shall appear clearly, that the interpretation which I have put upon them coincides exactly with the meaning annexed to them by the most distinguished of his successors. How far this is the case, my readers will be enabled to judge by the remarks which I am to state in the next chapter

comment une femme fait un enfant, et on croit savoir, comment nous faisons des idées.—(See the chapter in Voltaire's account of Newton's Discoveries, entitled *De l'Ame et des Idées.*)

* Note (B).

## CHAPTER THIRD.

INFLUENCE OF LOCKE'S ACCOUNT OF THE ORIGIN OF OUR KNOWLEDGE ON THE SPECULATIONS OF VARIOUS EMINENT WRITERS SINCE HIS TIME, MORE PARTICULARLY ON THOSE OF BERKELEY AND OF HUME.

"WE are percipient of nothing" (says Bishop Berkeley) "but of our own perceptions and ideas."—"It is evident to "any one who takes a survey of the objects of human know- "ledge, that they are either ideas actually imprinted on the "senses *, or else such as are perceived by attending to the "passions and operations of the mind †, or lastly, ideas "formed by help of memory and imagination, either com- "pounding, dividing, or barely representing those originally "perceived in the foresaid ways ‡."—"Light and colours," (he elsewhere observes) "heat and cold, extension and "figure; in a word, the things we see and feel, what are

* Ideas of Sensation.

† Ideas of Reflection.

‡ Principles of Human Knowledge, Sect. 1.

" they, but so many sensations, notions, ideas, or impres-
" sions on the senses; and is it possible to separate, even in
" thought, any of these from perception? For my own part,
" I might as easily divide a thing from itself *."

No form of words could shew more plainly, that, according to Berkeley's construction of Locke's language, his account of the origin of our ideas was conceived to involve, as an obvious corollary, " that all the immediate objects of
" human knowledge exist in the mind itself, and fall under
" the direct cognizance of consciousness, as much as our sen-
" sations of heat and cold, or of pleasure and pain."

Mr Hume's great principle with respect to the origin of our ideas, which (as I before hinted) is only that of Locke under a new form, asserts the same doctrine, with greater conciseness, but in a manner still less liable to misinterpretation.

" All our *ideas* are nothing but copies of our *impressions;*
" or, in other words, it is impossible for us to *think* of any
" thing which we have not antecedently *felt* †, either by our

* Principles of Human Knowledge, Sect. 5.

† The word *feeling*, whether used here literally or figuratively, can, it is evident, be applied only to what is the immediate subject of consciousness.

" *external* or our *internal* senses *." Mr Hume tells us elsewhere, that " nothing can be *present to the mind* but an " image or perception. The senses are only the inlets " through which these *images* are conveyed, without being " able to produce any immediate intercourse between the " mind and the object †."

That both of these very acute writers, too, understood, in its literal sense, the word *resemblance*, as employed by Locke, to express the conformity between our ideas of primary qualities and their *supposed* archetypes, is demonstrated by the stress which they have laid on this very word, in their celebrated argument against the existence of the material world. This argument (in which Hume entirely acquiesces) is thus stated by Berkeley :

" As for our senses, by them we have the knowledge only " of our sensations, ideas, or those things that are immediate- " ly perceived by sense, call them what you will ; but they " do not inform us, that things exist without a mind, or un- " perceived ;—*like to those which are perceived* ‡." On the contrary, " as there can be no notion or thought but in a " thinking being, so there can be no sensation but in a

* Of the Idea of Necessary Connexion, Part I.

† Essay on the Academical or Sceptical Philosophy.

‡ Principles of Human Knowledge, Sect. 18.

" sentient being; it is the act or feeling of a sentient being;
" its very essence consists in being felt. Nothing can *re-*
" *semble* a sensation, but a similar sensation in the same, or
" in some other mind. To think that any quality in a thing
" inanimate can *resemble* a sensation is absurd, and a contra-
" diction in terms."

It was already observed, how inconsistent this account of the origin of our ideas, as given by Locke, Berkeley, and Hume, is, with some conclusions to which we were led, in a former part of this discussion;—our conclusions, for example, with respect to the origin of our notions concerning our own existence, and our *personal identity*. Neither of these notions are derived immediately from consciousness; nor yet are they *copies* of any thing of which the human mind *could* ever have been conscious; and accordingly Mr Hume, true to his principles, rejects the belief, not only of the existence of the material world, but of the human mind itself, and of every thing else but impressions and ideas. The force of his argument on this subject, as well as of that alleged by Berkeley to disprove the existence of *matter*, (both of which I consider as demonstratively deduced from Locke's Theory,) I propose to examine afterwards in a separate Essay. At present, I only wish to infer from what has been stated, that, according to the most *probable* interpretation of Locke's own meaning, and according to the *unquestionable*

interpretation given to his words by Berkeley and Hume, his account of the origin of our ideas amounts to this, that we have no knowledge of any thing which we do not either learn from consciousness, at the present moment, or which is not treasured up in our minds, as a *copy* of what we were conscious of on some former occasion.

The constant reference which is made, in these times, by philosophers of every description, to *sensation and reflection*, as the sources of all our knowledge; and the variety of acceptations in which this language may be understood, renders it a matter of essential importance, in the examination of any particular system, that it should be distinctly ascertained, not only in what precise sense the author has adopted this very indefinite and ambiguous principle, but whether he has adhered uniformly to the same interpretation of it, in the course of his reasonings. In *one* sense of the proposition, (that, I mean, in which it stands opposed to the innate ideas of Des Cartes) I have already said, that it appears to myself to express a truth of high importance in the science of mind; and it has probably been in this obvious and unsuspicious acceptation, that it has been so readily and so generally assented to by modern philosophers. The great misfortune has been, that most of these, after having adopted the proposition in its most unexceptionable form, have, in the subsequent study of the applications made

of it by Locke, unconsciously imbibed, as an essential part of it, a scholastic prejudice with which it happened to be blended in his imagination, and which, since his time, has contributed more than any other error, to mislead the inquiries of his successors.

In order to illustrate a little further this very abstract subject, I shall add to the quotations already produced two short extracts from Dr Hutcheson; an author by no means blind to Locke's defects, but who evidently acquiesced implicitly in his account of the origin of our ideas, according to the most exceptionable interpretation of which it admits.

"*All* the ideas, or the materials of our reasoning and "judging, are received by some immediate powers of per- "ception, internal or external, which we may call senses. "Reasoning or intellect seems to raise no new species of "ideas, but to discover or decern the relations of those re- "ceived."—Of the full import of this proposition in the writer's own mind, he has put it in our power to judge, by a passage in another of his publications, where he has remarked, with singular acuteness, that "extension, figure, motion, "and rest, seem to be more properly ideas accompanying "the sensations of sight and touch, than the sensations of "either of those senses." The exception made by Hutcheson with respect to the particular ideas here enumerated, af-

fords a satisfactory comment on the meaning which he annexed to Locke's principle, in its general applications. From the cautious and doubtful manner in which it is stated, it is more than probable, that he regarded this exception as almost, if not altogether solitary.

The peculiarity which Hutcheson had the merit of first remarking, with respect to our ideas of extension, figure, and motion, might, one should have thought, have led him to conjecture, that Locke's principle, when applied to some of the other objects of our knowledge, would perhaps require an analogous latitude of construction. But no hint of such a suspicion occurs, as far as I recollect, in any part of his writings; nor does it appear that he was at all aware of the importance of the criticism on which he had stumbled. The fact is, as I shall have occasion to shew in another essay, he had anticipated the very instances which were afterwards appealed to by Reid, as furnishing an *experimentum crucis*, in support of his own reasonings against the ideal theory.

The clause, however, in these extracts which bears most directly on our present subject, is Dr Hutcheson's assertion, (in exact conformity to Locke's doctrine) "that all the ideas "or materials of our reasoning are received by certain "*senses*, internal, or external; and that reasoning or intellect

" raises no new species of ideas, but only discerns the rela-
" tions of those received."

To this assertion various conclusions, which we have been led to in a former part of this chapter, present unsurmountable objections;—those conclusions, more especially, which regard the *simple ideas* implied or involved in certain intuitive judgments of the mind. Thus, it is surely an intuitive truth, that the sensations of which I am now conscious, and all those of which I retain any remembrance, belong to one and the same being, which I call *myself*. Here is an intuitive judgment, involving the simple idea of *personal identity*. In like manner, the changes of which I am conscious in the state of my own mind, and those which I perceive in the external universe, impress me with a conviction, that some *cause* must have operated to produce them. Here is an intuitive judgment, involving the simple idea of *causation*.—To these and other instances of the same kind, may be added our ideas of *time*; of *number*; of *truth*; of *certainty*; of *probability*;—all of which, while they are manifestly peculiar to a rational mind, necessarily arise in the human understanding, when employed in the exercise of its different faculties. To say, therefore, with Cudworth, and some of the Greek philosophers, that Reason, or the Understanding, is a source of new ideas, is not so exceptionable a mode of speaking, as it may appear to be, at first sight, to those whose read-

ing has not extended beyond Locke's Essay. According to the system *there* taught, sense furnishes our ideas, and reason perceives their agreements or disagreements. But the truth is, that what Locke calls *agreements and disagreements*, are, in many instances, simple ideas, of which no analysis can be given; and of which the origin must therefore be referred to Reason, according to Locke's own doctrine *.

These observations seem to go far to justify the remark long ago made by the learned and ingenious Mr Harris, that, "though sensible objects may be the destined *medium* to "awaken the dormant energies of the understanding, yet "are the energies themselves no more *contained in sense*, than "the explosion of a cannon in the spark that gave it fire †."

The illustration which Cudworth had given, almost a century before, in his simple and unadorned language, of the same important truth, while it is correctly and profoundly philosophical, exhibits a view, so happily imagined, of the characteristical endowments or capacities of the human intellect, considered in contrast with the subordinate ministry of the senses, as to rival in its effect the sublime impressions of poetical description. "The mind perceives, by occasion

* The same observation is made by Dr Price in his *Review of the Principal Questions and Difficulties in Morals*, p. 49, 2d Edit.

† Hermes, Book iii. chap. iv.

" of outward objects, as much more than is represented to " it by sense, as a learned man does in the best written " book, than an illiterate person or brute. To the eyes of " both the same characters will appear; but the learned " man, in those characters, will see heaven, earth, sun, and " stars; read profound theorems of philosophy or geometry; " learn a great deal of new knowledge from them, and ad- " mire the wisdom of the composer; while to the other no- " thing appears but black strokes drawn on white paper*."

In the works of Leibnitz various passages occur, extremely similar in their spirit to those which have just been quoted. One of these I select, in preference to the rest, because it shews how early and how clearly he perceived that very vulnerable point of Locke's philosophy, against which the foregoing reasonings have been directed.

" In Locke's Essay, there are some particulars not unsuc- " cessfully expounded; but, on the whole, he has wandered " widely from his object; nor has he formed a just notion " of the nature of *truth* and of the *human mind*.—He seems, " too, not to have been sufficiently aware, that the ideas of " existence, of personal identity, of truth, besides many " others, may be said (in one sense) to be *innate* in the mind;

* Treatise of Immutable Morality, B. iv. c. ii.

" inasmuch as they are necessarily unfolded by the exercise " of its faculties. In other words, when we affirm that *there* " *is nothing in the intellect which was not previously in the* " *senses,* we must be always understood to except the in- " tellectual powers themselves, and the simple ideas which " are necessarily implied in our intellectual operations *."

In quoting these strictures upon Locke, I would not be understood to approve of the use which Leibnitz has here made of the word *innate;* as I think it is liable, in some degree, to the same objections which apply to the *innate ideas* of Des Cartes.

In both authors, this form of expression seems to imply, not only that ideas have an existence distinct from the faculty of thinking, but that *some ideas, at least,* form part of the *original furniture* of the mind; presenting to it treasures of

* As, in the above paragraph, I have departed a little from Leibnitz's language, in order to render his meaning somewhat more obvious to my readers, I think it proper to subjoin the words of the original.

" In Lockio sunt quædam particularia non male exposita, sed in summâ longe " aberravit a janua, nec naturam mentis veritatisque intellexit. Idem non satis ani- " madvertit ideas entis, substantiæ, unius et ejusdem, veri, boni, aliasque multas " menti nostræ ideo *innatas* esse, quia ipsa innata est sibi, et in se ipsâ hæc omnia " deprehendit. Nempe, nihil est in intellectu, quod non fuerit in sensu, nisi ipse " intellectus."—Tom. V. p. 355. (Edit. *Dutens.*)

knowledge, which it has only to *examine* by abstracted meditation, in order to arrive at the most sublime truths. The same remark may be extended to certain doctrines, which Mr Harris has connected with a passage already quoted from his *Hermes*; and also to the speculations of Dr Price concerning the origin of our ideas, in his *Review of the Principal Questions and Difficulties in Morals.* Of the limited functions of *sense*, these two very candid and profound inquirers were fully aware; but, like the other writers, they have blended, with their statement of this important fact, hypothetical expressions and notions, calculated to impose on an unreflecting reader, by a specious explanation of a mystery, placed beyond the reach of the human faculties*.' The supposition in which all these different philosophers seem to have agreed, of the existence of latent *ideas* in the mind, previous to the exercise of the senses, (a supposition bordering nearly on the old Platonic scheme of the soul's reminiscence) cannot be guarded against with too great caution; but, as to the arguments in the Essay of Human Understanding, which have exposed the phrase *innate ideas* to

* What I mean, in this instance, by a mixture of fact and of hypothesis, will be still more clearly illustrated by two quotations from Mr Harris's notes; which have the merit of stating fairly and explicitly the theories of their respective authors, without any attempt to keep their absurdity out of view (according to the practice of their modern disciples) by a form of words, in which they are only obscurely hinted to the fancy. For these quotations, see Note (C).

the ridicule of Locke's followers, I must own, that they have very little weight with me, when I recollect that Locke himself, no less than Des Cartes, gave his express sanction to the Ideal Theory. If that theory be rejected, and the word *idea* be understood as exactly synonimous with *thought* or *notion*, the phrase *innate ideas* becomes much less exceptionable; implying nothing more (though perhaps not in the plainest language) than the following propositions, which I have already endeavoured to prove: "That there are many of our "most familiar notions (altogether unsusceptible of analysis) "which relate to things bearing no *resemblance* either to "any of the sensible qualities of matter, or to any mental "operation which is the direct object of consciousness; "which notions, therefore, (although the senses may furnish "the *first occasions* on which they occur to the understanding) can neither be referred to sensation nor to reflection, "as their *fountains* or *sources*, in the acceptation in which "these words are employed by Locke*."

* D'Alembert's opinion on this question, although not uniformly maintained through all his philosophical speculations, appears to have coincided nearly with mine, when he wrote the following sentence.

"Les *idées innées* sont une chimere que l'experience reprouve; mais la manière dont nous acquérons des sensations et des idées refléchies, quoique prouvées par la "même experience, n'est pas moins incomprehensible."—(*Elem. de Phil. article Metaphysique.*)

From various other passages of D'Alembert's writings, it might be easily shewn, that by *the manner of acquiring sensations*, he here means, *the manner in which we*

The period at which these thoughts first arise in the mind is a matter of little consequence, provided it can be shewn to be a law of our constitution that they do arise, whenever the proper occasions are presented. The same thing may be said with respect to what Locke calls *innate practical principles*; and also with respect to what other writers have called *innate affections* of human nature. The existence of both of these some have affirmed, and others denied, without any suspicion that the controversy between them turned on little more than the meaning of a word.

*acquire our knowledge of the primary qualities of matter*; and that the *incomprehensibility* he alludes to, refers to the difficulty of conceiving how sensations, which are the proper subjects of *consciousness*, should suggest the knowledge of external things, to which they bear no *resemblance*.

# CHAPTER FOURTH.

## THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED *.

MR Locke's quibbles, founded on the word *innate*, were early remarked by Lord Shaftesbury. "*Innate* is a word he "poorly plays upon; the right word, though less used, is

* If any of my readers should think, that, in this section, I make too wide, and too abrupt a transition from the question concerning the origin of our knowledge, to that which relates to the moral constitution of human nature, I must beg leave to remind them that, in doing so, I am only following Mr Locke's arrangement in his elaborate argument against innate ideas. The indefinite use which he there makes of the word *idea*, is the chief source of the confusion which runs through that discussion. It is justly observed by Mr Hume, that "he employs it in a very loose "sense, as standing for any of our perceptions, our sensations and passions, as well "as thoughts."—"Now, in this sense" (continues Mr Hume) "I should desire "to know what can be meant by asserting, that self-love, or resentment of injuries, "or the passion of love between the sexes, is *not* innate?" The following passage, which forms a part of the same note, bears a close resemblance in its spirit to that quoted in the text from Lord Shaftesbury.

"It must be confessed, that the terms employed by those who denied *innate* "*ideas*, were not chosen with such caution, nor so exactly defined, as to prevent

"*connatural.* For what has birth, or progress of the fœtus "out of the womb, to do in this case? The question is not "about the *time* the ideas entered, or the *moment* that one "body came out of the other; but whether the constitution "of man be such, that being adult or grown up, at such or "such a time, sooner or later, (no matter when) *certain* "*ideas* will not infallibly, inevitably, necessarily spring up "in him *."

It has often struck me as a very remarkable circumstance, after what Locke has written with so much zeal against *innate principles, both speculative and practical,* that his own opinion upon this subject, as distinctly stated by himself in other parts of his works, does not seem to have been, at bot-

"all mistakes about their doctrine. For what is meant by *innate?* If innate be "equivalent to natural, then all the perceptions and ideas of the mind must be al- "lowed to be innate or natural, in whatever sense we take the latter word, whe- "ther in opposition to uncommon, artificial, or miraculous. If by innate be "meant contemporary to our birth, the dispute seems to be frivolous; nor is it "worth while to inquire at what time thinking begins, whether before or after our "birth."—Hume's Essays, Vol. II. (Note A.)

* I have substituted, in this quotation, the phrase *certain ideas,* instead of Shaftesbury's example,—*the ideas of order, administration, and a God;* with the view of separating his general observation from the particular application which he wished to make of it, in the tract from which this quotation is borrowed.—(See Letters to a Student at the University, Letter 8.)

tom, so very different from Lord Shaftesbury's, as either of these eminent writers imagined. All that has been commonly regarded as most pernicious in the first book of his essay, is completely disavowed and done away by the following very explicit declaration:

"He that hath the idea of an intelligent, but frail and "weak being, made by and depending on another, who is "omnipotent, perfectly wise and good, will as certainly "know, that man is to honour, fear, and obey God, as that "the sun shines when he sees it. For if he hath but the "idea of two such beings in his mind, and will turn his "thoughts that way and consider them, he will as certainly "find, that the inferior, finite, and dependent, is under an "obligation to obey the supreme and infinite, as he is cer-"tain to find that *three, four,* and *seven* are less than *fifteen,* if "he will consider and compute those numbers; nor can he "be surer in a clear morning that the sun is risen, if he "will but open his eyes, and turn them that way. But yet "these truths being never so certain, never so clear, he may "be ignorant of either, or all of them, who will never take "the pains to employ his faculties as he should to inform "himself about them *."

* Locke's Essay, B. iv. c. xiii. § 3.

It would not be easy to find a better illustration than this of the truth of Locke's observation, that most of the controversies among philosophers are merely verbal. The advantage, in point of unequivocal expression, is surely, in the present instance, not on *his* side; but notwithstanding the apparent scope of his argument, and still more, of the absurd fables which he has quoted in its support, the foregoing passage is sufficient to demonstrate, that he did not himself interpret (as many of his adversaries, and I am sorry to add, some of his admirers, have done,) his reasonings against innate ideas, as leading to any conclusion inconsistent with the certainty of human knowledge, or with the reality and immutability of moral distinctions.

I have enlarged on this collateral topic at greater length than I would otherwise have done, in consequence chiefly of the application which has been made, since Locke's time, of the principles which I have been controverting in the preceding chapters, to the establishment of a doctrine subversive of all our reasonings concerning the moral administration of the universe. Dr Hutcheson, one of the most zealous, and most able advocates for morality, seems to have paved the way for the scepticism of some of his successors, by the unguarded facility with which, notwithstanding his hostility to Locke's conclusions concerning *innate practical principles*, he adopted his opi-

nions, and the peculiarities of his phraseology, with respect to the origin of our ideas in general. I already observed, that according to both these writers, "it is the "province of *sense* to introduce *ideas* into the mind; and of "*reason*, to compare them together, and to trace their rela-"tions;"—a very arbitrary and unfounded assumption, undoubtedly, as I trust has been sufficiently proved in a former part of this argument; but from which it followed as a necessary consequence, that, if the words *right* and *wrong* express simple ideas, the origin of these ideas must be referred, not to reason, but to some appropriate power of *perception*. To this power Hutcheson, after the example of Shaftesbury, gave the name of the *moral sense*; a phrase which has now grown into such familiar use, that it is occasionally employed by many who never think of connecting it with any particular philosophical theory.

* Hutcheson himself was evidently apprehensive of the consequences which his language might be supposed to involve; and he has endeavoured to guard against them, though with very little success, in the following caution: "Let none "imagine, that calling the ideas of virtue and vice perceptions "of sense, upon apprehending the actions and affections of an-"other, does diminish their reality, more than the like asser-"tions concerning all pleasure and pain, happiness or misery. "Our reason often corrects the report of our senses about the

" natural tendency of the external action, and corrects such
" rash conclusions about the affections of the agent. But whe-
" ther our moral sense be subject to such a disorder as to have
" different perceptions from the same apprehended affections
" in any agent, at different times, as the eye may have of the
" colours of an unaltered object, it is not easy to determine:
" perhaps it will be hard to find any instances of such a
" change. What reason could correct, if it fell into such a
" disorder, I know not; except suggesting to its remembrance
" its former approbations, and representing the general sense
" of mankind. But this does not prove ideas of virtue and
" vice to be previous to a sense, more than a like correction of
" the ideas of colour in a person under the jaundice, proves
" that colours are perceived by reason, previously to sense."

Mr Hume was not to be imposed upon by such an evasion; and he has accordingly, with his usual acuteness, pushed this scheme of morals (which he evidently adopted from Hutcheson and Shaftesbury) to its ultimate and its legitimate conclusion. The words right and wrong, (he asserted) if they express a distinction at all analogous to that between an agreeable and a disagreeable *colour*, can signify nothing in the actions to which they are applied, but only certain *effects* in the mind of the spectator. As it is improper, therefore, (according to the doctrines of Locke's philosophy) to say of an object of taste that it is *sweet*, or of heat that it is

*in the fire*, so it is equally improper to speak of morality as a thing independent and unchangeable. "Were I not" (says he) "afraid of appearing too philosophical, I should re-"mind my readers of that famous doctrine, supposed to be "fully proved in modern times, 'that taste and colours, and "all other sensible qualities, lie, not in the bodies, but mere-"ly in the senses.' The case is the same with beauty and "deformity, *virtue and vice* *." In consequence of this view of the subject, he has been led to represent morality, as the object, not of *reason*, but of *taste*; the distinct offices of which he thus describes: "The former conveys the know-"ledge of *truth and falsehood*: the latter gives the sentiment "of beauty and deformity, *vice and virtue*. The one dis-"covers objects, as they really stand in nature, without ad-"dition or diminution: the other has a productive quality, "and, gilding or staining all natural objects with the colours "borrowed from internal sentiment, raises, in a manner, a "new creation †."

Without abandoning the hypothesis of a *moral sense*, Hutcheson might, I think, have made a *plausible* defence at least, against such inferences as these, by availing himself of the very ingenious and original remark which I already quoted ‡ from his own works, with respect to *extension, figure*,

* Hume's Essay's, Vol. I. Note (F.)

† Id. Vol. II. Appendix, concerning Moral Sentiment.

‡ See p. 31.

*and motion.* Unfortunately, he borrowed almost all his illustrations from the *secondary* qualities of matter; whereas, had he compared the manner in which we acquire our notions of right and wrong, to our perception of such qualities as extension and figure, his language, if not more philosophical than it is, would have been quite inapplicable to such purposes, as it has been since made subservient to, by his sceptical followers.

*Extension* was certainly a quality peculiarly fitted for obviating the cavils of his adversaries; the notion of it (although none can doubt that it was originally suggested by *sense*,) involving in its very nature an irresistible belief that its object possesses an *existence*, not only independent of our perceptions, but *necessary* and *eternal*, like the truth of a mathematical theorem.

The solid answer, however, to the sceptical consequences deduced from the theory of a *moral sense*, is, to deny the hypothesis which it assumes with respect to the distinct provinces of *sense* and of *reason*. That the origin of our notions of *right* and *wrong* is to be referred to the latter part of our constitution, and not to the former, I shall endeavour to shew in another work. At present, I shall only observe, that how offensive soever this language may be to those whose ears have been exclusively familiarized to the logical phraseology

of Locke, it is perfectly agreeable to the common apprehensions of mankind; which have, in all ages, led them to consider it, not only as *one* of the functions of reason, but as its *primary and most important* function, to guide our choice, in the conduct of life, between *right* and *wrong*, *good* and *evil*.—The decisions of the understanding, it must be owned, with respect to moral truth, differ from those which relate to a mathematical theorem, or to the result of a chemical experiment, inasmuch as they are always accompanied with some feeling or emotion of the heart; but on an accurate analysis of this *compounded sentiment* *, it will be found, that it is the intellectual judgment which is the ground-work of the feeling, and not the feeling of the judgment.

Nor is the language which I have adopted, in preference to that of Locke, with respect to the origin of our moral notions, sanctioned merely by popular authority. It coincides exactly with the mode of speaking employed by the soundest philosophers of antiquity. In Plato's Theætetus, Socrates observes, "that it cannot be any of the powers of sense that com-"pares the perceptions of all the senses, and apprehends the "general affections of things;" asserting, in opposition to Protagoras, that "this power is *reason*, or the governing principle "of the mind."—To illustrate what he means by *the general*

* See Note (D.)

*affections of things*, he mentions, as examples, *identity, number, similitude, dissimilitude, equality, inequality*, καλον και αισχρον ;—an enumeration which is of itself sufficient to shew, how very nearly his view of this subject approached to the conclusions which I have been endeavouring to establish concerning the origin of our knowledge *. The sentence which immediately follows could not have been more pointedly expressed, if the author had been combating the doctrine of a *moral sense*, as explained by Dr Hutcheson: "It seems to me, that for acquiring these notions, there is not appointed any distinct "or appropriate *organ*; but that the mind derives them from "the same powers by which it is enabled to contemplate and "to investigate truth †."

* See upon this subject Cudworth's Immutable Morality, p. 100, et seq. and Price's Review, &c. p. 50, 2d Edit.

† Μοι δοκει—ΟΥΔ'ΕΙΝΑΙ ΤΟΙΟΥΤΟΝ ΟΥΔΕΝ ΤΟΥΤΟΙΣ ΟΡΓΑΝΟΝ ΙΔΙΟΝ, αλλ' αυτη δι' αυτης η' ψυχη τα κοινα μοι φαινεται περι παντων επισκοπειν—Ομως δε τοσουτον γε προβεβηκαμεν, ωστε μη ζητειν αυτην (επιστημην) εν αισθησει το παραπαν, αλλ εν εκεινω τω ονοματι, ὁτι ποτ'εχει ἡ ψυχη ὁταν αυτη καθ'αυτην πραγματευηται περι ΤΑ ΟΝΤΑ.

The reproduction of the same philosophical doctrines, in different ages, in consequence of a recurrence of similar circumstances, has been often remarked as a curious fact in the history of the human mind. In the case now before us, the expressions which Plato puts into the mouth of Socrates, can be accounted for only by the wonderful similarity between the doctrines of Protagoras and those of some modern sceptics. "Nothing" (according to Protagoras) "is true or false, any "more than sweet or sour *in itself*, but relatively to the perceiving mind."—"Man "is the measure of all things; and every thing is that, and no other, which to every

The discussion into which we have been thus led almost insensibly, about the ethical scepticism which seems naturally to result from Locke's account of the origin of our ideas, while it serves to demonstrate how intimate the connection is between those questions in the science of mind, which, on a superficial view, may be supposed to be altogether independent of each other, will, I hope, suggest an apology for the length of some of my arguments upon scholastic questions, apparently foreign to every purpose of practical utility. I must, more especially, request, that this consideration may be attended to, when I so often recur in these pages to the paradox of Hume and Berkeley concerning the existence of the material world. It is not that I regard this theory of *idealism*, when considered by itself, as an error of any serious moment; but because an examination of it affords, in my opinion, the most palpable and direct means of exploding that principle of Locke, to which the most serious of Mr Hume's sceptical conclusions, as well as this comparatively inoffensive tenet, may be traced as to their common root. In offering this apology, I would not be understood to magnify, beyond their just value,

" one it *seems* to be; so that there can be nothing true, nothing existent, distinct " from the mind's own perceptions." This last maxim, indeed, is mentioned as the fundamental principle of the theory of this ancient sceptic. Παντων χρηματων μετρον ανθρωπον. Μετρον εκαστον ημων ειναι των τε οντων και μη. Τα φαινομενα εκαστω, ταυτα και ειναι. Plato Theætet.

the inquiries in which we have been now engaged, or those which are immediately to follow. Their utility is altogether accidental; arising, not from the positive accession they bring to our stock of scientific truths, but from the pernicious tendency of the doctrines to which they are opposed. On *this* occasion, therefore, I am perfectly willing to acquiesce in the estimate formed by Mr Tucker of the limited importance of metaphysical studies; however much I may be inclined to dispute the universality of its application to all the different branches of the *intellectual philosophy*. Indeed, I shall esteem myself fortunate (considering the magnitude of the errors which I have been attempting to correct) if I shall be found to have merited, in any degree, the praise of that humble usefulness which he has so beautifully described in the following words:

"The science of abstruse learning, when completely attained, is like Achilles's spear, that healed the wounds it had made before. It casts no additional light upon the paths of life, but disperses the clouds with which it had overspread them; it advances not the traveller one step on his journey, but conducts him back again to the spot from whence he had wandered*."

* Light of Nature Pursued. Introd. xxxiii. (London, 1768).

# ESSAY SECOND.

## ON THE IDEALISM OF BERKELEY.

## CHAPTER FIRST.

### ON SOME PREVAILING MISTAKES WITH RESPECT TO THE IMPORT AND AIM OF THE BERKELEIAN SYSTEM.

It is not my intention, in this essay, to enter at all into the argument with respect to the truth of the Berkeleian theory; but only to correct some mistakes concerning the nature and scope of that speculation, which have misled many of its partizans as well as of its opponents. Of these mistakes there are two which more particularly deserve our attention. The one confounds the scheme of *idealism* with those *sceptical* doctrines, which represent the existence of the material world as

a thing which is *doubtful*: the other confounds it with the physical theory of Boscovich, which, while it disputes the correctness of the commonly received opinions about some of the qualities of matter, leaves altogether untouched the *metaphysical* question, whether matter possesses an independent existence, or not.

1. It is well known to all who have the slightest acquaintance with the history of philosophy, that, among the various topics on which the ancient sceptics exercised their ingenuity, the question concerning the existence of the material world was always a favourite subject of disputation. Some doubts on the same point occur even in the writings of philosophers, whose general leaning seems to have been to the opposite extreme of dogmatism. Plato himself has given them some countenance, by hinting it as a thing not quite impossible, that human life is a continued sleep, and that all our thoughts are only dreams *. This scepticism (which I am inclined to think most persons have occasionally experienced in their early years †) proceeds on principles totally different from the doctrine of Berkeley, who asserts, with the most dogmatical confidence, that the existence of matter is *impos-*

* Τι αν τις εχοι τεκμηριον αποδειξαι, ει τις εροιτο, νυν ὑπαρ εν τω παροντι, ποτερον καθευδομεν, ἡ παντα ἁ διανυμεθα ονειρωττομεν, &c. &c.

† ——————"We are such stuff
"As dreams are made on, and our little life
"Is rounded with a sleep."—Shakespeare, *Tempest*.

*sible*, and that the very supposition of it is absurd. "The "existence of bodies, out of a mind perceiving them," (he tells us explicitly) "is not only impossible, and a contradic- "tion in terms; but were it possible, and even real, it "were impossible we should ever know it."

The attempt of Berkeley to disprove the existence of the material world, took its rise from the attempt of Des Cartes to demonstrate the truth of the contrary proposition. Both undertakings were equally unphilosophical; for, to argue in favour of any of the fundamental laws of human belief is not less absurd than to call them in question. In this argument, however, it must be granted, that Berkeley had the advantage; the conclusion which he formed being unavoidable, if the common principles be admitted on which they both proceeded*. It was reserved for Dr Reid to shew, that these principles are not only unsupported by any proof, but contrary to incontestible facts; nay, that they are utterly inconceivable, from the manifest inconsistencies and absurdities which they involve†. All this he has placed in so clear and strong a light, that Dr Priestley, the most acute of his antagonists, has found nothing to object to his argument, but that it is directed against a phantom of his own creation, and that the opinions which he combats were never seriously maintained by any philosophers, ancient or modern‡.

* Note (E). † Note (F). ‡ Note (G).

With respect to Mr. Hume, who is commonly considered as an advocate for Berkeley's system, the remarks which I have offered on the latter writer must be understood with great limitations. For, although his fundamental principles lead necessarily to Berkeley's conclusion, and although he has frequently drawn from them this conclusion himself, yet, on other occasions, he relapses into the language of doubt, and only speaks of the existence of the material world, as a thing of which we have not satisfactory evidence. The truth is, that, whereas Berkeley was sincerely and *bona fide* an idealist, Hume's leading object, in his metaphysical writings, plainly was to inculcate a universal scepticism. In this respect, the real scope of his arguments has, I think, been misunderstood by most, if not by all of his opponents. It evidently was *not*, as they seem to have supposed, to exalt *reasoning* in preference to our instinctive principles of belief; but by illustrating the contradictory conclusions to which our different faculties lead, to involve the whole subject in the same suspicious darkness. In other words, his aim was not to *interrogate* Nature, with a view to the discovery of truth, but by a *cross-examination* of Nature, to involve her in such contradictions, as might set aside the whole of her evidence as good for nothing.

With respect to Berkeley, on the other hand, it appears from his writings, not only that he considered his scheme of

idealism as resting on demonstrative proof, but as more agreeable to the common apprehensions of mankind, than the prevailing theories of philosophers, concerning the independent existence of the material world. "If the principles" (he observes in the Preface to his Dialogues) "which I here "endeavour to propagate are admitted for true, the conse- "quences which I think evidently flow from them are, that "atheism and scepticism will be utterly destroyed; many in- "tricate points made plain; great difficulties solved; specu- "lation referred to practice; and men reduced from para- "doxes to common sense."

That Mr Hume was perfectly aware of the essential difference between the aim of his own philosophy and that of Berkeley, is manifest from the following very curious note, in which, while he represents it as the common tendency of both to lead to scepticism, he assumes to himself entirely the merit of this inference. After stating the argument against the existence of matter, he adds: "This argument is "drawn from Dr Berkeley; and indeed most of the writings "of that very ingenious author, form the best lessons of scepti- "cism which are to be found either among the ancient or "modern philosophers, Bayle not excepted. He professes, "however, in his title-page, (and undoubtedly with great "truth) to have composed his book against the sceptics as "well as against the atheists and free-thinkers. But that

" all his arguments, though otherwise intended, are in reality " merely sceptical, appears from this, *that they admit of no* " *answer, and produce no conviction.* Their only effect is to " cause that momentary amazement and irresolution and " confusion which is the result of scepticism."

The observations which have been made on the scope of Berkeley's argument, may serve, at the same time, to illustrate that of Dr Reid's reply to it, which has been, in general, strangely misunderstood. In order to have a just idea of this, it is necessary always to bear in mind, that it is not directed against the sceptical suggestions of the Pyrrhonists, but against Berkeley's inferences from Locke's principles; or rather against the principles from which these inferences were deduced. The object of the author is not to bring forward any new proofs that matter does exist, nor (as has been often very uncandidly affirmed) to cut short all discussion upon this question, by an unphilosophical appeal to popular belief; but to overturn the pretended demonstration, that matter *does not* exist, by exposing the futility and absurdity of the principles which it assumes as *data*. That from these *data* (which had been received, during a long succession of ages, as incontrovertible articles of faith,) both Berkeley and Hume have reasoned with unexceptionable fairness, as well as incomparable acuteness, he acknowledges in every page of his works; and only asserts, that the force

of their conclusion is annihilated by the falseness and inconsistency of the hypothesis on which it rests. It is to *reasoning*, therefore, and to *reasoning* alone, that he appeals, in combating their doctrines; and the ground of his objection to these doctrines is *not* that they evince a blameable freedom and boldness of discussion;—but that their authors had suffered themselves too easily to be carried along by the received dogmas of the schools.

The very gross misapprehensions which have taken place with respect to the scope of Dr. Reid's book have probably been owing, in part, to the unfortunate title which he prefixed to it, of "an Inquiry into the Human Mind, *on the principles of Common Sense.*" So far, however, from meaning, by that phrase, to intimate a more than due respect for the established opinions of any particular sect or party, it must appear evident, to those who have taken the trouble to read the work, that his sole intention was to disclaim that implicit reverence for the current maxims, and current phraseology of the learned, which had misled so widely his two illustrious predecessors, Berkeley and Hume;—to assert, in this most important branch of science, an unlimited right of free inquiry; and to set an example of this freedom, by appealing from Locke's fundamental *hypothesis* (a hypothesis for which no argument can be produced but the authority of schoolmen,) to the unbiassed *reason* of the human race. It is this

*common reason of mankind* which he uniformly represents as the ultimate standard of truth; and of its decisions he forms his estimate, neither from the suffrages of the learned nor of the ignorant, but from those fundamental laws of belief which are manifested in the universal conduct of mankind, in all ages and countries of the world; and to the guidance of which the speculative sceptic must necessarily submit, the very moment he quits the solitude of the closet. It is not, therefore, vulgar prejudice that he wishes to oppose to philosophical speculation, but the essential principles of the human understanding to the gratuitous assumptions of metaphysical theorists. But on this topic I intend to explain myself more fully on a future occasion.

While Reid, however, in his controversy with Hume and Berkeley, thus opposes argument to argument, he does not follow the example of *Des Cartes*, in attempting to confirm our belief of the existence of matter, by the aid of deductive evidence. All such evidence, he justly observes, must necessarily take for granted some principles not more certain nor more obvious than the thing to be proved; and therefore can add nothing to its authority with men who have duly weighed the nature of reasoning and of demonstrative proof. Nor is this all. Where scepticism is founded on a suspicion of the possible fallibility of the human faculties, the very idea of correcting it by an appeal to argument is nugatory; inas-

much as such an appeal virtually takes for granted the paramount authority of those laws of belief which the sceptic calls in question. The belief, therefore, of the existence of matter, is left by Dr Reid on the very same footing on which Des Cartes found it; open, as it then was, and as it must for ever remain, to the sceptical cavils which affect equally every judgment which the human mind is capable of forming; but freed completely from those metaphysical objections which assailed it, as at variance with the conclusions of philosophy.

But although, in so far as the argument of the *Berkeleians* is concerned, Dr Reid's reasonings appear to me to be unanswerable, I am not completely satisfied that he has stated *the fact* on his own side of the question with sufficient fulness and correctness. The grounds of my hesitation on this point I propose to explain at some length, in the second chapter of this essay. In the mean time, I think it of still greater importance, to caution my readers against another misapprehension (equally remote with the former from truth) by which the Berkeleian controversy has been involved, by some late writers, in additional obscurity.

2. In order to prepare the way for the remarks which are to follow, it is necessary to observe (for the sake of those who are little conversant with the history of natural philosophy), that, according to an ingenious theory, proposed about fifty

years ago by Father Boscovich*, the notions which are commonly entertained concerning the qualities of matter, are the result of very rash and unwarranted inferences from the phenomena perceived. The ultimate elements (we are taught) of which matter is composed, are unextended atoms, or in other words, *mathematical points*, endued with certain powers of attraction and repulsion; and it is from these powers that all the physical appearances of the universe arise. The effects, for example, which are vulgarly ascribed to actual contact, are all produced by repulsive forces occupying those parts of space where *bodies* are perceived by our senses; and therefore the correct idea that we ought to annex to *matter*, considered as an object of perception, is merely that of *a power of resistance*, sufficient to counteract that compressing power which our physical strength enables us to exert.

With regard to this theory, I shall not presume to give any decided opinion. That it is attended with some very puzzling difficulties of a metaphysical nature, must, I think, be granted by its most zealous advocates; but, on the other hand, it can scarcely be denied, that the author, or his commentators, have been successful in establishing three propositions. 1. That the supposition of particles, extended and perfectly hard, is liable to strong, if not to insurmountable ob-

* *Theoria Philosophiæ Naturalis.* (First published at Vienna, in 1758.)

jections. 2. That there are no facts which afford any direct evidence in support of it. And, 3. That there are some indisputable facts which favour the opposite hypothesis. In proof of the last proposition, among a variety of other arguments, an appeal has been made to the compressibility and elasticity of all known bodies; to their contraction by cold; and to certain optical and electrical experiments, which shew that various effects, which our imperfect senses lead us to ascribe to the actual contact of different bodies, are, in fact, produced by a repulsive power, extending to a real, though imperceptible distance from their surfaces. The same phenomena, therefore, may be produced by repulsion, which we commonly ascribe to contact; and if so, why not refer to the same cause all effects of the same nature *?

* The following passage in Locke, when considered in connexion with some others in his writings, would almost tempt one to think, that a theory concerning *matter*, somewhat analogous to that of *Boscovich*, had occasionally passed through his mind. —"Nay, possibly, if we could emancipate ourselves from vulgar notions, and raise "our thoughts as far as they could reach, to a closer contemplation of *things*, we "might be able to aim at some dim and seeming conception, how matter might at first "be made, and begin to exist by the power of that eternal first Being.—But this "being what would perhaps lead us too far from the notions on which the philoso- "phy now in the world is built, it would not be pardonable to deviate so far from "them as to inquire, so far as grammar itself would authorize, if the common settled "opinion opposes it." —Essay on Human Understanding, Book iv. chap. x. § 18.

Whoever chooses to examine the grounds upon which I have hazarded the foregoing observation, may compare the passage just quoted with what Locke has said of *cohesion*, in Book ii. chap. xxiii. §§ 23, 24, et seq. more particularly in §§ 26 and 27.

A theory, essentially the same with this, has been proposed of late by different writers in this island, who seem to have been led to it entirely by their own speculations, without any knowledge of its having been previously started by another; and it has been in consequence of the particular view which some of them have taken of the subject, that the misapprehension which I am anxious at present to correct has chiefly arisen. In fact, the systems of Boscovich, and of Berkeley, have not the most remote relation to each other. The account, indeed, of some of the qualities of matter which is given in the former, is very different from that commonly entertained, but this account does not call in question the reality of matter, as an existence distinct from the perceiving mind. It does not affect, in the least, our notions of extension and figure; nor even those of hardness and softness, any

From the same passage, Dr. Reid conjectures, that "Locke had a glimpse of the "system which Berkeley afterwards advanced, although he thought proper to sup- "press it within his own breast." (Essays on the Intell. Powers, p. 170.) I think it much more probable, from the hints he has dropped in other parts of his essay, that he had some vague notion of a theory approaching to that of Boscovich. The following remark confirms me in this conjecture:

"Hardness consists in a firm cohesion of the parts of matter, making up masses of "a sensible bulk, so that the whole does not easily change its figure. And, indeed, "hard and soft are names that we give to things only in relation to the constitution of "our own bodies; that being generally called hard by us, which will put us to pain "sooner than change figure by the pressure of any part of our bodies; and that, on "the contrary, soft, which changes the situation of its parts upon an easy and un- "painful touch." Book ii. chap. iv. § 4.—See Note (H).

further, than as it defines these qualities by the relation which they bear to our animal force. The resistance opposed to our efforts implies an existence distinct from ours, as much as the efforts we are conscious of making imply our own existence; and therefore, whether we proceed on the common notions concerning matter, or on the hypothesis of Boscovich, the authority of that law of our nature which leads us to ascribe to things external an independent and permanent existence, remains unshaken. According to Berkeley, extension and figure, hardness and softness, and all other sensible qualities, are mere *ideas* of the mind, which cannot possibly exist in an insentient substance*

That the inference which I have now drawn against the scheme of *idealism*, from the theory of Boscovich, is perfectly agreeable to the metaphysical views of that profound and original philosopher, appears from various passages in his works: in particular, from the following observations, which I translate literally from one of his supplements to the didactic poem of Benedictus Stay, de *Systemate Mundi*:

* A remark to the same purpose has been made by Mr Smith, in his Essay on the External Senses. "Whatever system may be adopted concerning the hardness or "softness, the fluidity or solidity, the compressibility or incompressibility of the re- "sisting substance, the certainty of our distinct sense, and feeling of its externality, "or of its entire independency upon the organ which perceives it, or by which we "perceive it, cannot, in the smallest degree, be affected by any such system."—Essays on Philosophical Subjects, p. 204.

"By the power of *reflection*, we are enabled to distinguish "two different classes of ideas excited in our minds. To "some of these we are impelled, *by a very powerful instinct, "common to all men*, to ascribe an origin foreign to the mind "itself, and depending on certain external objects. Others, "we believe with the most complete conviction to have their "origin in the mind, and to depend on the mind for their "existence. The instruments or organs by which we re- "ceive the first kind of ideas are called *the senses*: their "external cause, or, as it is commonly called, *the object*, "is denoted by the words *matter* and *body*. The source of "the second class of our ideas (which we discover by reflect- "ing on the subjects of our own consciousness) is called the "*mind* or *soul*.

"In this manner we become acquainted with two different "kinds of *substances* (the *only* substances of which we possess "any knowledge); the one, a sensible or perceptible sub- "stance; the other, a substance endowed with the powers "of thought and of volition. Of the existence of neither is "it possible for us to doubt, (such is the force of those inti- "mations we receive from nature); not even in those cases "when, offering violence to ourselves, we listen to the sug- "gestions of the Pyrrhonists and the Egoists, and other so- "phistical perverters of the truth. Nay, even these sceptics "themselves are forced to acknowledge, that whatever

"doubts they may have experienced in their hours of specu-
"lation, vanish completely when the objects of their doubts
"are presented to their senses *."

I do not take upon me to defend the propriety of all the expressions employed in the foregoing passage. I quote it merely as a proof, that Boscovich himself did not conceive, that his peculiar notions concerning the nature of matter had the slightest tendency to favour the conclusions of Berkeley. On the contrary, he states his dissent from these conclusions in the strongest and most decided terms; coinciding so exactly with Reid in the very phraseology he uses, as to afford a presumption, that it approaches nearly to a correct and simple enunciation of the truth.

In the foregoing remarks on Boscovich's theory, considered in contrast with that of Berkeley, I have had an eye chiefly to some speculations of the late Dr Hutton; a philosopher eminently distinguished by originality of thought; and whose writings could not have failed to attract much more notice than they have yet done, if the great variety of his scientific pursuits had left him a little more leisure to cultivate the arts of composition and of arrangement. It would be fortunate, in this respect, for his literary fame, if the

* Romæ, 1755. T. i. p. 331.

same friendly and skilful hand which has illustrated and adorned his geological researches, would undertake the task of guiding us through the puzzling, but interesting labyrinth of his metaphysical discussions.

The following is the conclusion of Dr Hutton's argument concerning hardness and incompressibility :-

" In thus distinguishing things, it will appear, that incom-
" pressibility and hardness, *i. e.* powers resisting the change
" of volume and figure, are the properties of an external
" body ; and that these are the essential qualities of that ex-
" tended, figured thing, so far as it is only in these resisting
" powers that the conceived thing, termed *body*, is judged to
" subsist.

" But these properties of body, or those powers, are not
" found to be absolute ; so far as a hard body may be either
" broken or made soft, and so far as, by compression, a body
" may be diminished in its volume.

" Hence, the judgment that has been formed from the re-
" sistance of the external thing, is, in some measure, to be
" changed ; and that first opinion, with regard to apparent
" permanency, which might have been formed from the re-
" sistance of the perceived thing, must now yield to the posi-

" tive testimony of the sense, whereby the body is perceived
" to be actually diminished. That power of resistance there-
" fore, from whence a state of permanency had been con-
" cluded, is now found to be overcome; and those apparent
" properties of the body are, with all the certainty of human
" observation, known to be changed.

" But if the resistance, which is opposed by a natural bo-
" dy to the exertion of our will, endeavouring to destroy the
" volume, should be as perfectly overcome, as is that of
" hardness in fluidity, then the common opinion of mankind,
" which supposes the extension of a body to be permanent,
" would necessarily be changed. For, at present, we think
" that this resisting power, which preserves volume in bodies,
" is absolutely in its nature insurmountable, as it certainly is
" in relation to our moving power.

" Instead then of saying, that matter, of which natural
" bodies are composed, is perfectly hard and impenetrable,
" which is the received opinion of philosophers, we would af-
" firm, that there is no permanent property of this kind in a
" material thing, but that there are certain resisting powers
" in bodies, by which their volumes and figures are present-
" ed to us in the actual information; which powers, how-
" ever, might be overcome. In that case, the extension of
" the most solid body would be considered only as a condi-

" tional thing, like the hardness of a body of ice; which " hardness is, in the aqueous state of that body, perfectly " destroyed *."

All this coincides perfectly with the opinions of Boscovich; and it must, I think, appear conclusive to every person who reflects on the subject with due attention. Nor is there any thing in the doctrine it maintains, repugnant to the natural apprehensions of the mind; or requiring, for its comprehension, habits of metaphysical refinement. Indeed it amounts to nothing more than to the following incontestible remark, which was long before made by Berkeley; " that " both hardness and resistance" (which words he considers as perfectly synonymous with solidity) " are plainly relative to " our senses; it being evident, that what seems hard to one " animal, may appear soft to another, who hath greater " force and firmness of limbs †."

The case, however, is very different, when we find Dr Berkeley and Dr Hutton attempting to place extension and figure on the same footing with hardness and resistance. The former of these writers, seems to have considered the ideal existence of *extension* as still more manifest than that of

* Dissertations on different subjects in Natural Philosophy, pp. 289, and 290.

† Berkeley's Works.—Dublin, 1784, p. 133, Vol. I

*solidity;* having employed the first of these propositions, as a medium of proof for the establishment of the other. "If ex-"tension be once acknowledged to have no existence with-"out the mind, the same must necessarily be granted of mo-"tion, *solidity*, and gravity, since they all evidently suppose "extension. It is therefore superfluous to inquire particular-"ly concerning each of them. In denying extension, you "have denied them all to have any real existence *."

That Dr Hutton's opinion concerning magnitude and figure coincided exactly with that of Berkeley, appears not only from the general scope of his Theory of Perception; but from the account which he himself has given of the various particulars by which he conceived that theory to be discriminated from the Berkeleian system. "It may now" (says he) "be proper to observe, that the theory here given "of perception, although at first sight it may be thought si-"milar to that of Dr Berkeley, will be found to differ from "it, both in its nature and in its operation upon science; *al-"though the conclusion, that magnitude and figure do not exist "externally in relation to the mind, follows naturally as a conse-"quence of both.*"

"It is indeed" (he continues) "a necessary consequence

* Vol. I. p. 133.

" of both theories, that magnitude and figure do not exist " in nature, or subsist externally, but that these are purely " spiritual, or ideas in the mind: *This, however, is the only " point in which the two theories agree**."

It would be altogether foreign to my present purpose to attempt to follow the very ingenious author through the elaborate exposition which he has given of the characteristical peculiarities of his own doctrine. I have studied it with all the attention in my power; but without being able fully to comprehend its meaning. As far as I can judge, the obscurity which hangs over it arises, in a great measure, from a mistaken connection which Dr Hutton had supposed between his own physical conclusions concerning hardness, or relative incompressibility, and Berkeley's metaphysical argument against the independent existence of things external. How clearly this distinction was seized by Boscovich, is demonstrated by a passage already quoted: And accordingly, it may be remarked, that, notwithstanding the numerous objections which have been made to the validity of his reasonings, none of his critics has refused him the praise of the most luminous perspicuity.

* The truth is, that, while the conclusions of Boscovich and

* Hutton's Principles of Knowledge, Vol. I. p. 357.

of Hutton, with respect to *matter*, so far as hardness, or relative incompressibility is concerned, offer no violence to the common judgments of mankind, but only aim at a more correct and scientific statement of *the fact* than is apt to occur to our first hasty apprehensions,—the assertion of Berkeley, that *extension and figure* have merely an ideal or (as Dr Hutton calls it) a spiritual existence, tends to unhinge the whole frame of the human understanding, by shaking our confidence in those principles of belief which form an essential part of its constitution. But on this point I shall have an opportunity of explaining myself more fully, in the course of some observations which I propose to offer on the philosophy of Dr Reid.

# CHAPTER SECOND.

## SECTION FIRST.

*On the foundation of our belief of the existence of the material world, according to the statement of Reid.—Strictures on that statement.*

I have already said, that Reid's account of the existence of matter, although correct so far as it goes, does not embrace all the circumstances of the question. The grounds of this observation I shall endeavour to explain with all possible brevity: but before proceeding to the discussion, it is necessary for me to premise some remarks on a principle of our constitution, which may at first sight appear very foreign to the present argument; I mean, our belief of the permanence or stability of the order of nature.

That all our physical reasonings, and all those observations on the course of events, which lay the foundation of *foresight* or *sagacity*, imply an expectation, that the order of

things will, in time to come, continue similar to what we have experienced it to be in time past, is a fact too obvious to stand in need of illustration; but it is not equally clear, how this expectation arises at first in the mind. Mr Hume resolves it into the *association of ideas*, which leads us, after having seen two events often conjoined, to anticipate the second, whenever we see the first;—a theory to which a very strong objection immediately presents itself, That a single experiment is sufficient to create as strong a belief of the constancy of the result as ten thousand. When a philosopher repeats an experiment for the sake of greater certainty, his hesitation does not proceed from any doubt, that, in the same circumstances, the same phenomena will be exhibited; but from an apprehension, that he may not have attended duly to all the different circumstances in which the first experiment was made. If the second experiment should differ in its result from the first, he will not suspect that any change has taken place in the laws of nature; but will instantly conclude, that the circumstances attending the two experiments have not been exactly the same.

It will be said, perhaps, that although our belief in this instance is not founded on a repetition of one single experiment, it is founded on a long course of experience with respect to the order of nature in general. We have learned, from a number of cases formerly examined, that this order continues

uniform; and we apply this deduction as a rule to guide our anticipations of the result of every new experiment that we make. This opinion is supported by Dr Campbell in his Philosophy of Rhetoric; but it seems to me to afford a very unsatisfactory solution of the difficulty. It plainly differs essentially from Mr Hume's theory; for it states the fact in such a manner, as excludes the possibility of accounting for it by the *association of ideas;* while, at the same time, it suggests no other principle, by means of which any plausible explanation of it may be obtained. Granting, at present, for the sake of argument, that after having seen a stone often fall, the associating principle alone might lead me to expect a similar event, when I drop another stone; the question still recurs, (supposing my experience to have been hitherto limited to the descent of heavy bodies)—Whence arises my anticipation of the result of a pneumatical, an optical, or a chemical experiment? According, therefore, to Campbell's doctrine, we must here employ a process of analogical reasoning. The course of nature has been found uniform in all our experiments concerning heavy bodies; and therefore we may conclude, by analogy, that it will also be uniform in all other experiments we may devise, whatever be the class of phenomena to which they may relate. It is difficult to suppose, that such a process of reasoning should occur to children or savages; and yet I apprehend, that a child who had once burned his finger with a candle, would dread the same

result, if the same operation were to be repeated. Nor, indeed, would the case be different, in similar circumstances, with one of the lower animals.

In support of his own conclusion on this subject, Dr Campbell asserts*, "that experience, or the tendency of the mind "to associate ideas under the notion of causes and effects, is "never contracted by one example only." He admits, at the same time, that in consequence of the analogical reasoning which I mentioned, natural philosophers consider a single experiment, accurately made, as decisive with respect to a theory. It is evident that, upon this supposition, children, and the vulgar, must see two events often conjoined, before they apprehend the relation of cause and effect to subsist between them; whereas the truth is, that persons of little experience are always prone to apprehend a constant connection, even when they see a merely accidental conjunction. So firmly are they persuaded, that every change requires a cause, and so eager to discover it, that they lay hold of the event immediately preceding it, as something on which they may rest their curiosity; and it is experience alone that corrects this disposition, by teaching them caution in investigating the general laws which form a part of the order of the universe†.

* No. 1. p. 137.

† The account which is given in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, of the *conclusive-*

"From these observations, it seems to follow, that our expectation of the continuance of the laws of nature is not the result of the association of ideas, nor of any other principle generated by experience alone; and Mr Hume has shewn, with demonstrative evidence, that it cannot be resolved into any process of reasoning *a priori*. Till, therefore, some more satisfactory analysis of it shall appear than has yet been proposed, we are unavoidably led to state it as an original law of human belief. In doing so, I am not influenced by any wish to multiply unnecessarily original

*ness* of a single experiment is proof of a general law of nature is, at bottom, the very same with the theory of Campbell; and therefore a separate consideration of it is unnecessary.—This will appear evident from the following extract.

"EXPERIMENTAL PHILOSOPHY seems, at first sight, in direct opposition to the pro-
"cedure of nature in forming general laws." (The expression here is somewhat ambiguous; but the author plainly means,—in opposition to the natural procedure of the mind, in the investigation of general laws.) "These are formed by induction
"from multitudes of individual facts, and must be affirmed to no greater extent than
"the induction on which they are founded. Yet it is a matter of fact, a physical
"law of human thought, that one simple, clear, and unequivocal experiment, gives
"us the most complete confidence in the truth of a general conclusion from it to
"every similar case. Whence this anomaly? It is not an anomaly, or contradiction
"of the general maxim of philosophical investigation, but the most refined applica-
"tion of it. There is no law more general than this, that 'nature is constant in all
"her operations.' The judicious and simple form of our experiment insures us (we
"imagine) in the complete knowledge of all the circumstances of the event. Upon
"this supposition, and this alone, we consider the experiment as the faithful repre-
"sentative of every possible case of the conjunction."—(Article Philosophy, § 57. See also (in the same volume) article Physics, § 103.)

laws or ultimate truths; nor by any apprehension of the consequences that might result from an admission of any one of the theories in question. They are all of them, so far as I can see, equally harmless in their tendency, but all of them equally unfounded and nugatory, answering no purpose whatever, but to draw a veil over ignorance, and to divert the attention, by the parade of a theoretical phraseology, from a plain and most important fact in the constitution of the mind.

In treating of a very different subject, I had occasion, in a former work *, to refer to some philosophical opinions of Mr Turgot, coinciding nearly with those which I have now stated. These opinions are detailed by the author, at considerable length, in the article *Existence* of the French Encyclopedie; but a conciser and clearer account of them may be found in Condorcet's discourse, prefixed to his essay "On the "application of analysis to the probability of decisions pro-"nounced by a majority of votes." From this account it appears, that Turgot resolved "our belief of the existence of "the material world" into our belief of the continuance of "the laws of nature;" or, in other words, that he conceived our belief, in the former of these instances, to amount merely to a conviction of the established order of physical events;

* Philosophy of the Human Mind, chap. iv. sect. 5.

and to an expectation that, in the same combination of circumstances, the same event will recur. It has always appeared to me, that something of this sort was necessary to complete Dr Reid's speculations on the Berkeleian controversy; for although he has shewn our notions concerning the primary qualities of bodies to be connected, by an original law of our constitution, with the sensations which they excite in our minds, he has taken no notice of the grounds of our belief that these qualities have an existence *independent* of our perceptions. This belief (as I have elsewhere observed *) is plainly the result of *experience*; inasmuch as a *repetition* of the perceptive act must have been prior to any judgment, on our part, with respect to the separate and permanent reality of its object. Nor does *experience* itself afford a complete solution of the problem; for, as we are irresistibly led by our perceptions to ascribe to their objects a *future* as well as a present reality, the question still remains, how are we determined by the experience of *the past*, to carry our inference forward to a portion of time which is yet to come? To myself the difficulty appears to resolve itself, in the simplest and most philosophical manner, into that law of our constitution to which Turgot, long ago, attempted to trace it.

If this conclusion be admitted, our conviction of the per-

* Philosophy of the Human Mind, chap. iii.

manent and independent existence of matter is but a particular case of a more general law of belief extending to all other phenomena. The generalization seems to me to be equally ingenious and just; and while it coincides perfectly in its spirit and tendency with Reid's doctrine on the same point, to render that doctrine at once more precise and more luminous.

Nor is this view of the subject altogether a novelty in the history of science; any farther, than as it aims at a simple and literal statement of *the fact*, without prejudging any of the other questions, either physical or metaphysical, which may arise out of it. The same doctrine is obviously involved in the physical theory of Boscovich, as well as in some of the metaphysical reveries of Malebranche and of Leibnitz. The last of these writers has, indeed, expressed it very clearly and concisely in one of his letters, where he observes to his correspondent: "Les choses materielles en elles-même "ne sont que des phenomenes bien réglés *." The creed,

* The same mode of speaking has been adopted by some more modern authors; among others, by the late very ingenious and learned Mr Robison, in his Elements of Mechanical Philosophy. "To us," (he observes) "*matter is a mere phenomenon*." (§ 118.) Leibnitz was, I think, the first person by whom it was introduced; but in the writings of Mr Robison, wherever it occurs, it may be safely interpreted as referring to the physical theory of Boscovich, to which he had a strong and avowed leaning; although he was not blind to the various difficulties connected with it.

said to be so prevalent among the Hindoos, with respect to the nature of *matter*, would seem to be grafted on a conception nearly similar. If we may rely on the account given of it by Sir William Jones, it has not the most distant affinity, in its origin or tendency, to the system of idealism as it is now commonly understood in this part of the world; the former taking its rise from a high theological speculation; the latter being deduced as a sceptical consequence from a particular hypothesis concerning the origin of our knowledge, inculcated by the schoolmen, and adopted by Locke and his followers. "The difficulties" (Sir William tells us, with great clearness and precision) "attending the vulgar notion of material "substances, induced many of the wisest among the an- "cients, and some of the most enlightened among the mo- "derns, as well as the Hindoo philosophers, to believe that "the whole creation was rather an energy than a work, by "which the infinite mind, who is present at all times, and in "all places, exhibits to his creatures a set of perceptions like "a wonderful picture, or piece of music, always varied, yet "always uniform*."

In another passage, the same author observes, that "the *Vedantis*, unable to form a distinct idea of brute matter independent of mind, or to conceive that the work of

* Introduction to a translation of some Hindoo verses.

" supreme goodness was left a moment to itself, imagine
" that the Deity is ever present to his work, and constantly
" supports a series of perceptions, which in one sense they call
" illusory, *though they cannot but admit the reality of all created*
" *forms, as far as the happiness of creatures can be affected by*
" *them* *."

" The word MAYA," (we are afterwards informed) " or
" *delusion*, has a subtle and recondite sense in the *Vedanta*
" philosophy, where it signifies the system of *perceptions*, whe-
" ther of secondary, or of primary qualities, which the Deity
" was believed, by *Epicharmus*, *Plato*, and many truly pious
" men, to raise, by his omnipresent spirit, in the minds of
" his creatures; but which had not, in their opinion, any
" existence independent of mind †."

The essential difference between these doctrines, and those which Hume has shewn to be necessarily involved in the common account of *the origin of our knowledge*, must appear obvious to all who have any acquaintance with his writings. The Hin-

* Dissertation on the Gods of Greece, Italy, and India.

† Ibid. The last clause of this sentence is somewhat ambiguous; as it is not quite manifest, whether the author meant an existence independent of the *supreme mind*, or of the minds of *created percipient beings*. Neither the one opinion nor the other appears to me to be reconcileable with the doctrines, either of Epicharmus or of Plato. (Vide Bruckeri Hist. de Ideis, p. 9. Augustæ Vindelicorum, 1723.)

doo system represents the material universe, as, at all times, in a state of immediate dependence on the divine energy;—coinciding, in this respect, with the opinions of those pious men in our own quarter of the globe, who have supposed its continued existence to be the effect of a creative act renewed every moment; but admitting, in the most explicit terms, the regularity of the laws according to which its phenomena are exhibited to our senses, and the reality of these phenomena as permanent objects of science. The scepticism of Hume, on the contrary, proceeds entirely on a scholastic hypothesis concerning perception, which, when followed out to its logical consequences, leaves no evidence for the existence, either of the divine mind, or of any other; nor, indeed, for that of any thing whatever, but of our own impressions and ideas.

The fault of the Hindoo philosophy, as well as of the systems of Leibnitz and of Malebranche, is, that it pronounces dogmatically on a mystery placed beyond the reach of our faculties; professing to describe the mode in which the intellectual and material worlds are connected together, and to solve the inexplicable problem (as Bacon has justly called it) with respect to the *opus quod operatur Deus a principio usque ad finem*. In the present state of our knowledge, it is equally absurd to reason for it as against it; but thus much must be allowed in its favour, that while, in its moral tendency, it is

diametrically opposite to that of the theory with which it has sometimes been classed, it explicitly recognizes the consistency and certainty of those principles of belief on which mankind proceed in the ordinary business of life, as well as in all their physical inquiries concerning the order of nature.

The statement, on the other hand, given by Turgot, possesses this advantage peculiar to itself, that it describes the simple fact with scientific precision; involving no metaphysical theory whatever, any more than Newton's statement of the law of gravitation. In both cases; premises are furnished for a most important conclusion in natural theology; but that conclusion is as foreign to our researches concerning the physical laws of our perceptions, as it would have been to Newton's purpose, to have blended it with the physical and mathematical inquiries which are contained in his *Principia*.

Nor let any one imagine that this statement has the slightest tendency to detract from the *reality* of external objects. It rests our evidence for this *reality*, on the very same footing with what we possess for the regularity and permanence of those *physical laws* which furnish the most interesting, as well as most stable objects of human knowledge; and, even when combined with the theological hypothesis of the Hindoos, only varies our ordinary mode of conception, by keep-

ing constantly in view the perpetual dependence of the universe, in its *matter as well as in its form*, on the hand of the Creator.

I must again repeat, with respect to this statement of Turgot, that it differs from that of Reid, merely in resolving our belief of the permanent and independent existence of matter into another law of our nature still more general; and of this law it is worthy of observation, that its authority has not only been repeatedly recognized by Reid, but that he has laid much more stress on its importance than any preceding writer. According to the statements of both, this belief is assumed as an ultimate fact in the constitution of the mind; and the trifling difference in their language concerning it, (considering that neither could have borrowed the slightest hint from the other) adds no inconsiderable weight to their joint conclusions.

To this natural belief, common to all mankind (a belief which evidently is altogether independent of any exercise of our reasoning powers), Reid, as well as some other Scotish philosophers, have applied the epithet *instinctive*; not with the view of conveying any new theory concerning its origin, but merely to exclude the unsatisfactory theories of their predecessors. For this supposed innovation in language, they have been severely censured and ridiculed by a late celebrat-

ed Polemic; but the strictures which, in this instance, he has bestowed on them, will be found to apply to them, in common with the most correct reasoners in every part of modern Europe. Of this I have already produced one instance, in a quotation from the works of a very learned and profound Italian*; and another authority to the same purpose is furnished by D'Alembert, a writer scrupulously cautious in his selection of words. The following passage agrees so exactly with Reid's philosophy, in point of doctrine as well as of phraseology, that the coincidence can be accounted for only by the anxious fidelity with which both authors have, on this occasion, exemplified the precepts of the *inductive logic*.

"The truth is, that as no relation whatever can be discovered between a sensation in the mind, and the object by which it is occasioned, or at least to which we refer it, it does not appear possible to trace, by dint of reasoning, any practicable passage from the one to the other. Nothing but a species of *instinct*, more sure in its operation than reason itself, could so forcibly transport us across the gulf by which mind seems to be separated from the material world†."

* See p. 66. of this volume.

† En effet, n'y ayant aucun rapport entre chaque sensation, et l'objet qui l'occasionne; ou du moins auquel nous la rapportons, il ne paroit pas qu'on puisse trouver par le raisonnement de passage possible de l'un à l'autre : il n'y a qu'une espéce d'in-

"In every science" (the same author elsewhere observes) "there are principles true, or supposed, which the mind "seizes by *a species of instinct*. To this *instinct* we ought to "yield without resistance; otherwise, by recognizing the "existence of a series of principles without end, and abandoning the possibility of any fixed points for the commencement of our reasonings, we must plunge ourselves "into universal scepticism *."

The inference which I draw from these quotations is, *not* that the word *instinct* is employed in them with unexceptionable propriety, but that, in applying it to characterize certain *judgments* of the mind, the philosophers who have been so contemptuously treated on that account by

stinct, plus sur que la raison même, qui puisse nous forcer à franchir un si grand intervalle.—*(Discours préliminaire de l'Encyclopedie.)*

In the last clause of the sentence, I have departed a little from the words of the original; but I flatter myself, that I have rendered my author's meaning with sufficient exactness.

* Il est dans chaque science des principes vrais ou supposés, qu'on saisit par une espéce d'instinct auquel on doit s'abandonner sans résistance; autrement il faudroit admettre dans les principes un progrès à l'infini qui seroit aussi absurde qu'un progrès à l'infini dans les êtres et dans les causes, et qui rendroit tout incertain, faute d'un point fixe d'où l'on pût partir.—*(Elemens de Philosophie*, Art. Metaphysique.)

In the alternative stated in the first clause of this sentence, *(des principes vrais ou supposés)* I presume that D'Alembert had in view the distinction between those sciences which rest ultimately on *facts*; and the different branches of pure mathematics which rest ultimately on *definitions*, or *hypotheses*.

Dr *Priestley*, have not departed from the practice of their predecessors. They alone who have studied with care the science of human nature, can be fully sensible how difficult it is, on the one hand, for the clearest and most cautious thinkers, to describe its phenomena in definite and unequivocal terms; and how easy it is, on the other, for the most superficial critic to cavil, with plausibility, at the best phraseology which language can afford. Nor has a philosopher, in this branch of knowledge, the privilege, as in some others, of introducing new terms of his own invention, without incurring the charge of absurd and mysterious affectation. He must, of necessity, persevere in employing terms of a popular origin; or, in other words, in employing an instrument made by the most rude and unskilful hands, to a purpose where the utmost conceivable nicety is indispensably requisite.

The number of such criticisms, I am inclined to suspect, would be considerably diminished, if every cavil at an obnoxious word were to be accompanied with the suggestion of a less exceptionable substitute. In the mean time, it is the fault of those who devote themselves to this study, if they do not profit by these criticisms where they have the slightest foundation in justice, by approximating more and more to that correctness and uniformity in the use of language, towards which so great advances have been made in our own

times; but which, after all our efforts, we must content ourselves with recommending to the persevering industry of our successors, as the most essential of all *desiderata* for insuring the success of their researches. Till this great end be, in some measure, accomplished, we must limit our ambition to the approbation of the discerning few; recollecting, (if I may borrow the words of Mr Burke,) that our conclusions are not fitted "to abide the test of a captious controversy, but of a "sober and even forgiving examination; that they are not "armed, at all points, for battle, but dressed to visit those "who are willing to give a peaceful entrance to truth *."

## SECTION SECOND.

*Continuation of the subject.—Indistinctness of the line drawn by Reid, as well as by Des Cartes and Locke, between the* primary *and the* secondary *qualities of matter.—Distinction between the primary qualities of matter, and its mathematical affections.*

I have yet another criticism to offer on Dr Reid's reasonings with respect to *perception*;—a criticism not founded upon any

* See Note (I).

flaw in his argument, but upon his inattention, in enumerating the *primary qualities of matter*, to a very essential distinction among the particulars comprehended in his list; by stating which distinction, he might, in my opinion, have rendered his conclusions much more clear and satisfactory.

Into this oversight, Dr Reid was very naturally led by the common arrangement of his immediate predecessors; most of whom, since the time of Locke, have classed together, under the general title of *primary qualities*, hardness, softness, roughness, smoothness, &c. with *extension, figure*, and *motion* *. In this classification he has invariably followed them, both in his inquiry into the Human Mind, and in his Essays on the Intellectual Powers; a circumstance the more remarkable, that he has incidentally stated, in different parts of his works, some very important considerations, which seem to point out obviously the necessity of a more strictly logical arrangement.

After observing, on one occasion, that "hardness and soft-"ness, roughness and smoothness, figure and motion, do all

* According to Locke, the primary qualities of matter are solidity, extension, figure, motion, or rest, and *number*.—(Book ii. chap. viii. § 9.)—In the Theory of Berkeley, the word *solidity* is employed as synonymous with *hardness* and *resistance*. (Berkeley's works, p. 133. Vol. I. Dublin edition of 1784.) Following these guides, Reid has been led to comprehend, in his enumeration (very inadvertently in my opinion) the heterogeneous qualities specified in the text.

" suppose extension, and cannot be conceived without it;" he adds, that "he thinks it must, on the other hand, be allowed, " that if we had never felt any thing hard or soft, rough or " smooth, figured or moved, we should never have had a " conception of extension: so that, as there is good ground " to believe that the notion of extension could not be prior " to that of other primary qualities; so it is certain that it " could not be posterior to the notion of any of them, being " necessarily implied in them all *."

In another passage, the same author remarks, that "though " the notion of space seems not to enter at first into the " mind, until it is introduced by the proper objects of sense; " yet, being once introduced, it remains in our conception " and belief, though the objects which introduced it be re- " moved. We see no absurdity in supposing a body to be " annihilated; but the space that contained it remains: and " to suppose that annihilated, seems to be absurd †."

Among the various inconveniences resulting from this indistinct enumeration of *primary qualities*, one of the greatest has been, the plausibility which it has lent to the reasonings of Berkeley, and of Hume, against the existence of an external world. *Solidity* and *extension* being confounded together

* Inquiry, chap. v. sect. 5.

† Essays on the Int. Powers, p. 262. 4to edition.

by both, under one common denomination, it seemed to be a fair inference, that whatever can be shewn to be true of the one, must hold no less when applied to the other. That their conclusions, even with respect to solidity, have been pushed a great deal too far, I have already endeavoured to shew; the resistance opposed to our compressing force, manifestly implying the existence of something *external*, and altogether *independent of our perceptions*:—but still there is a wide difference between the notion of *independent* existence, and that ascribed to *extension* or *space*, which, as Dr Reid observes, carries along with it an irresistible conviction, that its existence is eternal and necessary; equally incapable of being created or annihilated. The same remark may be applied to the system of Dr Hutton, who plainly considered extension and hardness as qualities of the same order; and who, in consequence of this, has been led to blend (without any advantage whatever to the main object of his work) the metaphysics of Berkeley with the physics of Boscovich, so as to cast an additional obscurity over the systems of both. It is this circumstance that will be found, on examination, to be the principal stumbling-block in the Berkeleian theory, and which distinguishes it from that of the Hindoos, and from all others commonly classed along with it by metaphysicians; that it involves the annihilation of space as an external existence; thereby unhinging completely the natural conceptions of the mind with respect to a truth,

about which, of all within the reach of our faculties, we seem to be the most completely ascertained; and which, accordingly, was selected by Newton and Clarke, as the groundwork of their argument for the necessary existence of God *.

I am always unwilling to attempt innovations in language; but I flatter myself it will not be considered as a rash or superfluous one, after the remarks now made, if I distinguish extension and figure by the title of *the mathematical affections*

* This species of sophistry, founded on an indistinctness of classification, occurs frequently in Berkeley's writings. It is thus that, by confounding primary and secondary qualities under one common name, he attempts to extend to both, the conclusions of Des Cartes and Locke with respect to the latter. "To what purpose is it" (he asks) "to dilate on that which may be demonstrated with the utmost evidence in a "line or two, to any one that is capable of the least reflection? It is but looking "into your own thoughts, and so trying whether you can conceive *it* possible for a "*sound*, or figure, or motion, or *colour*, to exist without the mind, or unperceived. This easy trial may make you see, that what you contend for is a downright "contradiction. Insomuch, that I am content to put the whole on this issue; if you "can but conceive it possible for one *extended moveable substance*, or, in general, "for any one *idea, or any thing like an idea*, to exist otherwise than in a mind perceiving it, I shall readily give up the cause." (Principles of Human Knowledge, section xxii.)

The confusion of thought which runs through the foregoing passage was early remarked by Baxter, in his Inquiry into the nature of the Human Soul. In the *first* sentence, he observes, that "*figure* and *motion* are nicely shuffled in with *colour* and "*sound*, though they are qualities of a different kind;" and, in the *last*, that "*extended moveable substance* is supposed to be *a species of idea*;"—"in which case" (he adds) "Dr Berkeley is very safe in his argument." (Vol. II. p. 276. 3d edit.)

*of matter* *; restricting the phrase *primary qualities* to hardness and softness, roughness and smoothness, and other properties of the same description. The line which I would draw between *primary* and *secondary* qualities is this; that the former necessarily involve the notion of *extension*, and consequently of *externality* or *outness* †; whereas the latter are only conceived as the unknown causes of known sensations; and, when *first apprehended by the mind*, do not imply the existence of any thing locally distinct from the subjects of its own consciousness. But these topics I must content myself with merely hinting at, on the present occasion ‡.

If these observations be well-founded, they establish *three* very important facts in the history of the human mind. 1. That the notion of the *mathematical affections* of matter presupposes the exercise of our external senses; inasmuch as it

* This phrase I borrow from some of the elementary treatises of natural philosophy.

† The word *outness*, which has been of late revived by some of Kant's admirers in this country, was long ago used by Berkeley in his Principles of Human Knowledge, (sect. xliii.); and, at a still earlier period of his life, in his Essay towards a new theory of Vision, (sect. xlvi.) I mention this, as I have more than once heard the term spoken of as a fortunate innovation.

‡ For Locke's distinction between primary and secondary qualities, see his Essay, Book ii. chap iii. § 9. Of its logical accuracy some judgment may be formed from its influence in leading so very acute an inquirer to class *number* in the same list with *solidity* and *extension*. The reader will find some additional illustrations on the subject of secondary qualities in note (K).

is suggested to us by the same sensations which convey to us the knowledge of its *primary qualities*. 2. That this notion involves an irresistible conviction, on our part, not only of the external existence of its objects, but of their necessary and eternal existence; whereas, in the case of the primary qualities of matter, our perceptions are only accompanied with a belief, that these qualities exist externally, and independently of *our* existence as percipient beings; the supposition of their annihilation by the power of the Creator, implying no absurdity whatsoever. 3. That our conviction of the necessary existence of extension, or space, is neither the result of reasoning nor of experience, but is inseparable from the very conception of it; and must therefore be considered as an ultimate and essential law of human thought.

The very same conclusion, it is manifest, applies to the notion of *time;* a notion which, like that of *space*, presupposes the exercise of our external senses; but which, when it is once acquired, presents irresistibly its object to our thoughts as an existence equally independent of the human mind, and of the material universe. Both these existences, too, swell in the human understanding to infinity; the one to immensity, the other to eternity; nor is it possible for imagination itself to conceive a limit to either. How are these facts to be reconciled with that philosophy which teaches, that all our knowledge is derived from experience?

The foregoing reasonings have led us, by a very short, and, I hope, satisfactory process, to the general conclusion which forms the fundamental principle of the *Kantian system*; a system plainly suggested to the author, by the impossibility he found of tracing any resemblance between *extension* and the *sensations* of which we are conscious. "The no- "tion (or intuition) of *space*" (he tells us) "as well as that "of *time*, is not empirical; that is, it has not its origin in "experience. On the contrary, both these notions are sup- "posed, or implied, as *conditions* in all our empirical percep- "tions; inasmuch as we cannot perceive nor conceive an "external object, without representing it to our thoughts as "*in space*; nor can we conceive any thing, either without "us or within us, without representing it to ourselves, as in "*time*. *Space* and *time*, therefore, are called, by Kant, the "two *forms of our sensibility*. The first is the *general form* of "our external senses: the second, the *general form* of all our "senses, external and internal.

"These notions of space and of time, however, although "they exist in us *à priori*, are not" (according to Kant) "*innate ideas*. If they are anterior to the perceptions of "our senses, it is only in the order of reason, and not in the "order of time. They have indeed their origin in ourselves; "but they present themselves to the understanding only in "consequence of occasions furnished by our sensations; or

" (in Kant's language) by our *sensible modifications*. Separat-
" ed from these modifications, they could not exist; and,
" without them, they would have remained for ever latent
" and sterile*."

* De Gerando. Hist. des Systemes, Tom. II. p. 208, 209. It is proper for me to observe here, that, for the little I know of Kant's philosophy, I am chiefly indebted to his critics and commentators; more particularly, to M. De Gerando, who is allowed, even by Kant's countrymen, to have given a faithful exposition of his doctrines; and to the author of a book published at Copenhagen, in 1796, entitled, *Philosophiæ Criticæ Secundum Kantium Expositio Systematica.* Some very valuable strictures on the general spirit of his system may be collected from the appendix subjoined by Mr Prevost to his French translation of Mr Smith's posthumous Essays; from different passages of the *Essais Philosophiques* of the same author; and from the first article in the second number of the Edinburgh Review.

As to Kant's own works, I must fairly acknowledge, that, although I have frequently attempted to read them in the Latin edition printed at Leipsic, I have always been forced to abandon the undertaking in despair; partly from the scholastic barbarism of the style, and partly from my utter inability to unriddle the author's meaning. Wherever I have happened to obtain a momentary glimpse of light, I have derived it, not from Kant himself, but from my previous acquaintance with those opinions of Leibnitz, Berkeley, Hume, Reid, and others, which he has endeavoured to appropriate to himself under the deep disguise of his new phraseology. No writer certainly ever exemplified more systematically, or more successfully, the precept which Quinctilian (upon the authority of Livy) ascribes to an ancient rhetorician; and which, if the object of the teacher was merely to instruct his pupils how to command the admiration of the multitude, must be allowed to reflect no small honour on his knowledge of human nature. " Neque id novum vitium est, cum jam apud Ti-
" tum Livium inveniam fuisse præceptorem aliquem, qui discipulos obscurare quæ
" dicerent, juberent, Græco verbo utens σκότισον. Unde illa scilicet egregia lauda-
" tio: *Tanto melior, ne ego quidem intellexi.*" (Quinct. Instit.)

*En ecrivant, j'ai toujours taché de m'entendre*, is an expression which Fontenelle

The only important proposition which I am able to extract from this jargon is, that, as *extension* and *duration* cannot be supposed to bear the most distant resemblance to any sensations of which the mind is conscious, the origin of these notions forms a manifest exception to the account given by Locke of the primary sources of our knowledge. This is precisely the ground on which Reid has made his stand against the scheme of Idealism; and I leave it to my readers to judge, whether it was not more philosophical to state, as he has done, the *fact*, in simple and perspicuous terms, as a demonstration of the imperfection of Locke's theory, than to have reared upon it a superstructure of technical mystery, similar to what is exhibited in the system of the German metaphysician.

In justice, at the same time, to Kant's merits, I must repeat, that Dr Reid would have improved greatly the statement of his argument against Berkeley, if he had kept as constantly in the view of his readers, as Kant has done, the essential distinction which I have endeavoured to point out between the *mathematical affections* of matter, and its *primary qualities*. Of this distinction he appears to have been fully aware himself, from a

somewhere uses, in speaking of his own literary habits. It conveys a hint not unworthy of the attention of authors;—but which I would not venture to recommend to that class who may aspire to the glory of founding new schools of philosophy.

passage which I formerly quoted; but he has, in general, slurred it over in a manner which *seemed* to imply that he considered them both as precisely of the same kind.

I shall only add farther, that the idea or conception of *motion* involves the ideas both of *extension* and of *time*. That the idea of *time* might have been formed, without any ideas either of *extension* or of *motion*, is sufficiently obvious; but it is by no means equally clear, whether the idea of *motion* presupposes that of *extension*, or that of *extension* the idea of *motion*. The question relates to a fact of some curiosity in the natural history of the mind; having, for its object, to ascertain, with logical precision, the *occasion* on which the idea of *extension* is, in the first instance, acquired. But it is a question altogether foreign to the subject of the foregoing discussion. Whichever of the two conclusions we may adopt, the force of Reid's argument against Locke's principle will be found to remain undiminished *.

See Note (L).

# ESSAY THIRD.

## ON THE INFLUENCE OF LOCKE'S AUTHORITY UPON THE PHILOSOPHICAL SYSTEMS WHICH PREVAILED IN FRANCE DURING THE LATTER PART OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

THE account given by Locke of the origin of our ideas, which furnished the chief subject of one of the foregoing Essays, has, for many years past, been adopted implicitly, and almost universally, as a fundamental and unquestionable truth, by the philosophers of France. It was early sanctioned in that country, by the authority of Fontenelle, whose mind was probably prepared for its reception, by some similar discussions in the works of Gassendi; at a later period, it acquired much additional celebrity, from the vague and exaggerated encomiums of Voltaire; and it has since been assumed, as the common basis of their respective conclusions concerning the history of the human understanding, by Condil-

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lac, Turgot, Helvetius, Diderot, D'Alembert, Condorcet, Destutt-Tracy, De Gerando, and many other writers of the highest reputation, at complete variance with each other, in the general spirit of their philosophical systems *.

But although all these ingenious men have laid hold eagerly of this common principle of reasoning, and have vied with each other in extolling Locke for the sagacity which he has displayed in unfolding it, hardly two of them can be named who have understood it exactly in the same sense; and perhaps not one who has understood it precisely in the sense annexed to it by the author. What is still more remarkable, the praise of Locke has been loudest from those who seem to have taken the least pains to ascertain the import of his conclusions.

The mistakes so prevalent among the French philosophers on this fundamental question, may be accounted for, in a great measure, by the implicit confidence which they have reposed in Condillac, (whom a late author † has distinguished by the title of *the Father of Ideology*), as a faithful expounder of Locke's doctrines; and by the weight which

* Tous les philosophes François de ce siècle ont fait gloire de se ranger au nombre des disciples de Locke, et d'admettre ses principes.—(*De Gerando, de la Generation des Connoissances Humaines*, p. 81.)

† Destutt-Tracy.

Locke's authority has thus lent to the glosses and inferences of his ingenious disciple. In the introduction to Condillac's Essay on the Origin of Human Knowledge, after remarking, that "a philosopher often announces the truth, without being "aware of it himself;" he adds, that "it seems to have been, "by some accident of this sort that the Peripatetics were led "to assume, as a principle, that all our knowledge comes by "the senses:—a principle which they were so far from com-"prehending, that none of them was able to unfold it in de-"tail; and which it was reserved for the moderns to bring "to light, after a long succession of ages."

"Bacon" (the same author continues) "was perhaps the "first who perceived it; having made it the groundwork of "a treatise, in which he gives excellent precepts for the ad-"vancement of the sciences. The Cartesians rejected it with "contempt, because they formed their judgment of it only "upon the statement given by the Peripatetics. At last, "Locke laid hold of it, and has the merit of being the first "by whom its truth was demonstrated."

Of the meaning which Condillac annexed to this discovery of Locke, a sufficient estimate may be formed from the following sentence: "According to the system which derives "all our knowledge from the senses, nothing is more easy "than to form a precise notion of what is meant by the word

" *idea.* Our *ideas* are only *sensations*, or portions *abstracted* " from some sensation, in order to be considered apart. " Hence two sorts of ideas, the *sensible*, and the *abstract**." On other occasions, he tells us, that " all the operations of " the understanding are only *transformed sensations*†; and " that the faculty of *feeling* comprehends all the other powers " of the mind." I must acknowledge, for my own part, (with a very profound writer of the same country) " that " these figurative expressions do not present to me any clear " conceptions; but, on the contrary, tend to involve Locke's " principle in much additional obscurity‡."

To how very great a degree this vague language of Condillac has influenced the speculations of his successors, will appear from some passages which I am now to produce; and which, in my opinion, will sufficiently shew through what channel the French philosophers have, *in general*, acquired their information, with respect to Locke's doctrine concerning the origin of our ideas §.

* Traité des Systemes, p. 68.

† Le jugement, la réflexion, les desirs, les passions, &c. ne sont que la sensation même qui se transforme differemment.—(Traité des Sensations, p. 4.)

‡ De Gerando, de la Generation des Connoissances Humaines, p. 78.

§ In justice to some individuals, I must observe here, that the vagueness of Condillac's language, in this instance, has been remarked by several of his own countrymen. " Trompé par la nouveauté d'une expression qui paroit avoir pour lui un " charme secret, renfermant toutes les opérations de l'esprit sous le titre commun de

"When Aristotle" (says Helvetius) "affirmed, *nihil est in* "*intellectu quod non fuit prius in sensu,* he certainly did not "attach to this maxim the same meaning with Locke. In "the Greek philosopher, it was nothing more than the "glimpse of a future discovery, the honour of which be- "longs to the Englishman alone *."

"*sensation transformée,* Condillac croit avoir rendre aux faits une simplicité qu'il "n'a placée que dans les termes." In a note on this passage, the same author adds, "Cette observation a été faite par M. Prevost, dans les notes de son mémoire *sur les* "*signes;* par M. Maine-Biran, dans son Traité *de l'Habitude,* &c. Cet abus des "termes est si sensible, qu'on s'etonne de l'avoir vu renouvelé depuis, par des écri- "vains très-éclairés." De Gerando Histoire Comparée, &c. Tome I. pp. 345, 346.

The work of M. Maine-Biran here referred to, is entitled, "Influence de l'Habi- "tude sur la faculté de penser. Ouvrage qui a remporté le prix sur cette question "proposée par la classe des sciences morales et politiques de l'Institut National: *De-* "*terminer quelle est l'influence de l'habitude sur la faculté de penser; ou, en d'au-* "*tres termes, faire voir l'effet que produit sur chacune de nos facultés intellectu-* "*elles, la fréquente répétition des mêmes operations.*"

Although I differ from this author in many of his views, I acknowledge, with plea- sure, the instruction I have received from his ingenious Essay.—For his criticism on Condillac's Theory of *Transformed Sensations,* see pp. 51 and 52 of the *Traité de l'Habitude.*

To prevent any ambiguities that may be occasioned by the general title of *French Philosophers,* it is necessary for me to mention, that I use it in its most restricted sense; without comprehending under it the writers on the Human Mind, who have issued from the school of *Geneva,* or who have belonged to other parts of Europe, where the French language is commonly employed by men of learning, in their publications.

"* Lorsqu' Aristote a dit, *nihil est in intellectu,* &c. il n'attachoit certainement

What was the interpretation annexed by *Helvetius* himself to Locke's doctrine on this point, appears clearly from the corollary which he deduced from it, and which he has employed so many pages in illustrating; "that every thing in man "resolves ultimately into *sensation or the operation of feeling.*" This, therefore, is the whole amount of the discovery which *Helvetius* considered as the exclusive glory of Locke.

"It is to Aristotle we owe" (says *Condorcet*) "that im- "portant truth, the first step in the science of mind, that *our* "*ideas,* even such as are most abstract, most strictly intellec- "tual, (so to speak) have their origin in our sensations. But "this truth he did not attempt to support by any demonstra-

"pas à cet axiome les même idées que M. Locke. Cette idée n'etoit tout au plus, "dans le philosophe Grec, que l'apperçevance d'une découverte à faire, et dont "l'honneur appartient en entier au philosophe Anglois." (De l'Esprit, disc. iv.)

It is observed by Dr Gillies, in his very valuable Analysis of Aristotle's Works, that "he nowhere finds, in that author, *the words universally ascribed to him,* nihil "est in intellectu," &c. He quotes, at the same time, from Aristotle, the following maxim, which seems to convey the same meaning, almost as explicitly as it is possible to do, in a different language: εν τοις ειδεσι τοις αισθητοις τα νοητα εστι. (Gillies's Arist. 2d edition, Vol. I. p. 47.) I must remark here, that the clause, which I have distinguished by *italics,* in the above quotation from Dr Gillies, is somewhat too unqualified, at least when applied to the writers of this country. Mr Harris (whose *Hermes* happens now to be lying before me) mentions explicitly the phrase in question, as *a noted school axiom.* (Harris's Works, Vol. I. p. 419.) Nor do I at present recollect any one author of reputation who has considered it in a different light.

"tion. It was rather the intuitive perception of a man of "genius, than the result of a series of observations accurate-"ly analysed, and systematically combined, in order to de-"rive from them some general conclusion. Accordingly, "this germ, cast in an ungrateful soil, produced no fruit, till "after a period of more than twenty centuries *.

"At length, Locke made himself master of the proper "clue. He shewed, that a precise and accurate analysis of "ideas, resolving them into other ideas, earlier in their ori-"gin, and more simple in their composition, was the only "means to avoid being lost in a chaos of notions, incomplete, "incoherent, and indeterminate; destitute of order, because "suggested by accident; and admitted among the materials "of our knowledge, without due examination.

"He proved by this analysis, that the whole circle of our "ideas results merely from the operation of our intellect up-"on the sensations we have received; or more accurately "speaking, that *all our ideas are compounded of sensations*, of-"fering themselves simultaneously to the memory, and after "such a manner, that the attention is fixed, and the percep-"tion limited to a particular collection, or portion of the sen-"sations combined †."

* Outlines of Historic. View, &c. Eng. Trans. pp. 107, 108.

† Ibid. pp. 240, and 241.—Not having the original in my possession, I have

The language, in this extract, is so extremely vague and loose, that I should have been puzzled in my conjectures about its exact import, had it not been for one clause, in which the author states, with an affectation of more than common accuracy, as the general result of Locke's discussions, this short and simple proposition, that *all our ideas are compounded of sensations*. The clause immediately preceding these words, and of which they are introduced as an explanation, or rather as an amendment, certainly seems, at first sight, to have been intended to convey a meaning very different from this, and a meaning not liable, in my opinion, to the same weighty objections. But, neither the one interpretation nor the other, can possibly be reconciled with Locke's doctrine, as elucidated by himself in the particular arguments to which he applies it, in various parts of his Essay.

I shall only add to these passages a short quotation from *Diderot*, who has taken more pains than most French writers, to explain, in a manner perfectly distinct and unequivocal, his own real opinion with respect to the origin and the extent of human knowledge.

"Every idea must necessarily, when brought to its state

transcribed the above passage very nearly from the English Translation, published at London in 1795.

" of ultimate decomposition, resolve itself into a *sensible* re-
" presentation, or picture; and, since every thing *in* our un-
" derstanding has been introduced there by the channel of
" sensation, whatever proceeds *out* of the understanding, is
" either chimerical, or must be able, in returning by the
" same road, to re-attach itself to its sensible archetype.
" Hence an important rule in philosophy; That every ex-
" pression which cannot find an external and a sensible ob-
" ject to which it can thus establish its affinity, is destitute of
" signification *.

When we compare this conclusion of Diderot's with the *innate ideas* of Des Cartes, the transition from one extreme to the other seems wonderful indeed. And yet I am inclined

* Toute idée doit se résoudre en dernière décomposition en une representation sensible, et puisque tout ce qui est dans notre entendement est venu par la voie de notre sensation, tout ce qui sort de notre entendement est chimerique, ou doit, en retournant par le même chemin, trouver, hors de nous, un objet sensible pour s'y rattacher. De la une grande règle en philosophie; c'est que toute expression qui ne trouve pas *hors de nous* un objet sensible auquel elle puisse se rattacher, est vuide de sens.—(*Oeuvres de Diderot*, Tom. VI.)

In this *philosophical rule*, *Diderot* goes much farther than Mr Hume, in consequence of the different interpretation which he has given to Locke's principle. In other respects, the passage now quoted bears, in its spirit, a striking resemblance to the reference which Hume has made, in the following argument, to his own account of the *origin of our ideas*, as furnishing an incontrovertible canon of sound logic, for distinguishing the legitimate objects of human knowledge, from the illusions of fancy and of prejudice. " One event follows another; but we never can observe

to ascribe to the *lateness* of the period when Locke's philosophy became prevalent in France; the extravagance of the length to which his doctrines have since been pushed by some French writers. The implicit faith which was so long attached by their immediate predecessors to the Cartesian system, naturally prepared the way for the sudden and blind admission of a contrary error: so just is the remark of a candid and judicious inquirer, that "the first step from a "complete ignorance of a philosophical principle, is a disposition to carry its generalization beyond all reasonable "bounds*."

It is remarked by D'Alembert, as a curious circumstance in the literary character of his countrymen, that, though singularly fond of novelty in matters of taste, they have always

"any tie between them. They seem *conjoined*, but never *connected*. And, as "we can have no idea of any thing which never appeared to our outward sense, or "inward sentiment, the necessary conclusion *seems* to be, that we have no idea of "connexion, or power, at all; and that these words are absolutely without any "meaning, when employed either in philosophical reasonings or common life."—(Of the Idea of Necessary Connexion, Part ii.)

* Rien n'est plus voisin de l'ignorance d'un principe, que son excessive generalisation.—(*De Gerando*, Introduct, p. xx.)

To this maxim I would beg leave to subjoin another, that "no step is more natural or common, than to pass all at once from an implicit faith in a philosophical "dogma, to an unqualified rejection of it, with all the truths, as well as errors, "which it embraces."—The fault, in both cases, arises from a weak and slavish subjection of the judgment to the authority of others.

shewn themselves, in the pursuits of science, extremely bigotted to old opinions. "These two biasses," (he adds) "apparently so strongly contrasted with each other, have their "common origin in various causes, and chiefly in that passion for enjoyment, which seems to be the characteristical "feature in our minds. Objects which are addressed immediately to feeling or sentiment, cannot continue long in request, for they cease to be agreeable, when the effect "ceases to be instantaneous. The ardour beside, with which "we abandon ourselves to the pursuit of them, is soon exhausted; and the mind disgusted, almost as soon as satisfied, flies to something new, which it will quickly abandon "for a similar reason. The understanding, on the contrary, "is furnished with knowledge, only in consequence of patient meditation; and is therefore desirous to prolong, as "much as possible, the enjoyment of whatever information "it conceives itself to have acquired."

In illustration of this remark, he mentions the obstinate adherence of the French philosophers to the *scholastic doctrines*; which they did not abandon till the period when the *succeeding* school, which first triumphed over the dogmas of Aristotle, had, in several of the other countries of Europe, shared the fate of its predecessor. "The theory of the Vortices" (he observes) "was not adopted in France, till it "had received a complete refutation by Newton. It is not

" yet thirty years" (he adds) " since we began to renounce " the system of Des Cartes. Maupertuis was the first per- " son who had the courage openly to avow himself a New- " tonian *."

As a farther confirmation of D'Alembert's observation, I must take the liberty to add, (at the risk, perhaps, of incurring the charge of national partiality) that, on most questions connected with the philosophy of the human mind, his countrymen are, at least, half a century behind the writers of this island †. While Locke's account of the origin of our ideas continued to be the general creed in Great Britain, it was almost unknown in France; and now that, after long discussion, it begins, among our best reasoners, to shrink into its proper dimensions, it is pushed, in that country, to an extreme, which hardly any British philosopher of the smallest note ever dreamed of. In consequence of the writings of Reid, and of a few others, the word *idea* itself is universally regarded here, even by those who do not acquiesce

* Melanges, &c. Tom I. p. 149. (Amsterdam edition, 1770.) This Discourse was first published in 1751.

† I need scarcely add that, in this observation, I speak of the general current of philosophical opinion, and not of the conclusions adopted by the speculative few who think for themselves. On many important points, every candid Englishman who studies the history of this branch of science, will own, with gratitude, the obligations we owe to the lights struck out by Condillac and his successors.

implicitly in Reid's conclusions, as at the best a suspicious and dangerous term; and it has already nearly lost its technical or Cartesian meaning, by being identified as a synonyme with the simpler and more popular word, *notion*. Our neighbours, in the mean time, have made choice of the term *ideology*, (a Greek compound, involving the very word we have been attempting to discard) to express that department of knowledge, which had been previously called *the science of the human mind*; and of which they themselves are always reminding us, that it is the great object to trace, *in the way of induction*, the intellectual phenomena to their general laws. It is a circumstance somewhat ludicrous, that, in selecting a new name for this branch of study, an appellation should have been pitched upon, which seems to take for granted, in its etymological import, the truth of a hypothesis, which has not only been completely exploded for more than fifty years, but which has been shewn to be the prolific parent of half the absurdities both of ancient and modern metaphysicians *.

Among the French philosophers above mentioned, there is

*. We are told, by one of the most acute and original partizans of this new nomenclature, that *Ideology* is a branch of *Zoology*; "having, for its object, to examine the "intellectual faculties of man, and of other animals." The classification, I must own, appears to myself not a little extraordinary; but my only reason for objecting to it here is, that it is obviously intended to prepare the way for an assumption, which at once levels man with the brutes, without the slightest discussion. "*Penser, c'est toujours sentir, et ce n'est rien que sentir.*"—Elem. d'Ideologie, par L. C. Destutt-Tracy, *Senateur*. Paris, 1804.

one whom I ought, perhaps, to have taken an earlier opportunity of separating from the rest, on account of the uncommon union displayed in his writings, of learning, liberality, and philosophical depth. To those who have read his works; it is scarcely necessary for me to add the name of De Gerando; an author, between whose general views and my own, I have been peculiarly flattered to remark a striking coincidence; and whose dissent from some of the conclusions which I have endeavoured to establish, I would willingly believe, is owing more to the imperfect statement I have yet given of my opinions, than to the unsoundness of the arguments which led me to adopt them. In the present instance, at least, his opinion seems to me to be, at bottom, nearly, if not exactly, the same with that which I proposed in my first volume; and yet a careless reader would be apt to class us with two sects diametrically opposed to each other.

"All the systems which can possibly be imagined, with " respect to the generation of our ideas, may be reduced," (according to M. De Gerando*) " *as to their fundamental* " *principle, to this simple alternative: either all our ideas have* " *their origin in impressions made on our senses, or there are* " *ideas which have not their origin in such impressions; and*

* That I may do no injustice to M. De Gerando, by any misapprehension of his meaning on so nice a question, I have quoted the original in note (M).

" *which, of consequence, are placed in the mind immediately, be-*
" *longing to it as a part of its nature or essence.*

" Thus, the opinions of philosophers, whether antient or " modern, concerning the generation of our ideas, arrange " themselves in two opposite columns; the one comprehend- " ing the systems which adopt for a principle, *nihil est in in-* " *tellectu quin prius fuerit in sensu*; the other, the systems " which admit the existence of *innate ideas*, or of ideas inhe- " rent in the understanding."

That M. De Gerando himself did not consider this classification as altogether unexceptionable, appears from the paragraph immediately following; in which he remarks, that, " among the philosophers who have adopted these contra- " dictory opinions, there are several, apparently attached to " the same systems, who have not adopted them from the " same motives; or who have not explained them in the " same manner; or who have not deduced from them the " same consequences." Nothing can be juster or better expressed than this observation; and I have only to regret, that it did not lead the very ingenious and candid writer to specify, in the outset of his work, the precise import of the various systems here alluded to. Had he done so, he could not have failed to have instantly perceived, that, while some of the opinions which he has classed under one common de-

nomination, agree with each other merely in language, and are completely hostile in substance and spirit; others which, agreeably to his principle of distribution, must be considered as disputing between them the exclusive possession of the philosophical field, differ, in fact, chiefly in phraseology; while, on every point connected with the foundations of a sound and enlightened logic, they are perfectly agreed.

If, in endeavouring to supply this omission in my friend's treatise, I should be successful in establishing the justness of the criticism which I have hazarded on some of his historical statements, the conclusion resulting from my argument will, I am confident, be not less acceptable to him than to me, by shewing, not only how very nearly we are agreed on this fundamental article of our favourite science, but that the case has been similar with many of our predecessors, who little suspected that the difference between the tenets, for which they contended so zealously, was little more than nominal.

Without entering into a nice discrimination of systems, evidently the same in their nature and tendency, and distinguished only by some accessory peculiarities, (such, for example, as the respective doctrines of Des Cartes and Malebranche concerning *innate ideas*) it appears to me, that the most noted opinions of modern philosophers, with respect to the origin of our knowledge, may be referred to one or other of the following heads.

1. The opinion of those who hold the doctrine of *innate ideas*, in the sense in which it was understood by Des Cartes and Malebranche; that is, as implying the existence in the *mind*, of *objects of thought distinct from the mind itself*; coeval with it as an essential part of its intellectual furniture; and altogether independent of any information collected from without. Of this description (according to the Cartesians) are the ideas of *God*, of *existence*, of *thought*, and many others, which, though clearly apprehended by the understanding, bear no resemblance to any sensation: and which, of consequence, they concluded must have been implanted in the mind, at the moment of its first formation.

It is against the hypothesis of *innate ideas, thus* interpreted, and which, in the present times, scarcely seems to us to have ever merited a serious refutation, that Locke directs the greater part of his reasonings in the beginning of his Essay.

In England, for many years past, this doctrine has sunk into complete oblivion, excepting as a monument of the follies of the learned; but we have the authority of *De Gerando* to assure us, that it was taught in the schools of France till towards the very conclusion of the last century *.

* L'idée de *Dieu*, celle de *l'existence*, celle de la *pensée*, disent ils, ne ressemblent à aucune sensation. Cependant elles sont clairement dans l'esprit: il faut donc qu'elles viennent d'une autre source que des sens, et par conséquent, qu'elles soient *placées*

Perhaps this circumstance may help to account for the disposition which so many French philosophers have shewn, in later times, to reject, indiscriminately, every principle which they conceived to have the most remote connection with that absurd hypothesis.

2. The opinion of *Locke*, in the sense in which it was understood, not only by himself, but by Berkeley and Hume, and indeed (with a very few exceptions) by all the most eminent philosophers of England, from the publication of the Essay on the Human Understanding, till that of Reid's Inquiry into the mind. This opinion leads, (as has been already observed) by a short and demonstrative process of reasoning, to Berkeley's conclusion with respect to the ideal *existence* of the material world, and to the universal scepticism of Hume.

3. The opinion of *Locke*, as interpreted by *Diderot*;—in which sense it leads obviously to an extravagance diametrically opposite to that of Berkeley,—the scheme of *materialism*.—Nor does it lead merely to *materialism*, as that scheme

*immediatement dans notre ame. Ces opinions ont été, presque jusqu' à la fin du dernier siècle, enseignées dans les écoles de France.*—De la Generation des Connoissances Humaines, p. 62, (A. Berlin, 1802.)

This fact affords an additional confirmation of a remark formerly quoted from D'Alembert, see p. 110 of this volume.

has been explained by some of its more cautious advocates. It involves, as a necessary consequence, (according to the avowal of Diderot himself) the total rejection, from the book of human knowledge, of every word which does not present a notion copied, like a picture or image, from some archetype among the objects of external perception.

4. The opinion, or rather the *statement* of Locke, modified and limited by such a comment as I have attempted in the 4th section of the first chapter of the Philosophy of the Human Mind. The substance of that comment, I must beg leave once more to remind my readers, amounts to the following general proposition:

All our simple notions, or, in other words, all the primary elements of our knowledge, are either presented to the mind immediately by the powers of consciousness and of perception*, or they are gradually unfolded in the exercise of the various faculties which characterize the human understanding. According to this view of the subject, *the sum total of our knowledge may undoubtedly be said to originate in sensation*, inasmuch as it is by impressions from without, that consciousness is first awakened, and the different faculties of the understanding put in action; but that this enunciation of the fact is, from its conciseness and vagueness, liable

* See Note (N).

to the grossest misconstruction, appears sufficiently from the interpretation given to it by Locke's French commentators, and more particularly by *Diderot*, in the passage quoted from his works in a former part of this Essay.

It must appear obvious to every person who has read, with due attention, Mr De Gerando's memoir, that it is precisely in the qualified sense which I have attached to Locke's words, that he all along defends them so zealously; and yet I am strongly inclined to consider Locke's words, *when thus interpreted*, as far more widely removed from the opinion of Diderot, than from the antiquated theory of *innate ideas*. Perhaps I might even venture to say, that were the ambiguous and obnoxious epithet *innate* laid aside, and all the absurdities discarded, which are connected, either with the Platonic, with the Scholastic, or with the Cartesian hypothesis, concerning the nature of *ideas*, this last theory would agree, in substance, with the conclusion which I have been attempting to establish by an induction of facts. For my own part, at least, I must acknowledge that, in the passages formerly quoted from Cudworth, Leibnitz, and Harris *, there are only a few peculiarities of hypothetical phraseology to which I am able to oppose any valid objection. The statements contained in them exhibit the whole truth, blended with a portion of fiction; whereas, that to which

* See pp. 34, 35, 36.

they stand opposed, not only falls short of the truth, but is contradicted by many of the most obvious and incontrovertible phenomena of the understanding.

On this, as on many other occasions, I have had much pleasure in recalling to recollection an observation of Leibnitz. "Truth is more generally diffused in the world than "is commonly imagined; but it is too often disguised, "and even corrupted, by an alloy of error, which conceals "it from notice, or impairs its utility. By detecting it "wherever it is to be found, among the rubbish which our "predecessors have left behind them, we have not only the "advantage resulting from the enlargement of our know-"ledge, but the satisfaction of substituting, instead of a suc-"cession of apparently discordant systems, a permanent and "eternal philosophy *(perennem quandam philosophiam)*,—vary-"ing widely in its forms from age to age, yet never fail-"ing to exhibit a portion of truth, as its immutable "basis."

The mistakes into which modern philosophers have fallen, on the important question now under our review, may, I think, be traced to a rash extension, or rather, to a total misapplication of Bacon's maxim, *that all our knowledge is derived from experience.* It is with this maxim that Locke prefaces his theory concerning *sensation* and *reflection*, and it

is from that preface that Mr De Gerando borrows the motto of his own speculations upon the *origin of our ideas*. "Let "us suppose" (says Locke) "the mind to be, as we say, "white paper, void of all characters, without any ideas; how "comes it to be furnished? Whence comes it by that vast "store which the busy and boundless fancy of man has paint-"ed on it, with an almost endless variety? Whence has it "all the materials of reason and knowledge? To this I an-"swer, in a word, from *experience*. In that all our knowledge "is founded, and from that it ultimately derives itself*."

In what sense this celebrated maxim ought to be understood, I shall endeavour to shew more particularly, if I should live to execute a plan which I have long meditated, of analysing the logical processes by which we are conducted to the different classes of truths, and of tracing the different kinds of evidence to their respective sources in our intellectual frame. For my present purpose, it is sufficient to observe, in general, that however universally the maxim may

* It is a circumstance somewhat curious in Locke's Essay, that in no part of it are the works of Bacon quoted, or even his name mentioned. In taking notice of this, I do not mean to insinuate, that he has been indebted to Bacon for ideas which he was unwilling to acknowledge. On the contrary, I think that the value of his Essay would have been still greater than it is, if he had been better acquainted with Bacon's writings. The chief sources of Locke's philosophy, where he does not give scope to his own powerful and original genius, are to be found in Gassendi and Hobbes.

be supposed to apply to our knowledge of *facts*, whether relating to external nature, or to our own minds, we must, nevertheless, presuppose the existence of some intellectual capacities or powers in that being, by whom this knowledge is to be acquired; powers which are necessarily accompanied, in their exercise, with various *simple notions*, and various *ultimate laws of belief*, for which experience is altogether incompetent to account. How is it possible, for example, to explain, upon this principle alone, by any metaphysical refinement, the operations of *that reason* which observes these phenomena; which records the past; which looks forward to the future; which argues synthetically from things known, to others which it has no opportunity of subjecting to the examination of the senses; and which has created a vast science of demonstrated truths, presupposing no knowledge whatever but of its own definitions and axioms? To say that, even in *this* science, the ideas of *extension*, of *figure*, and of *quantity*, are originally acquired by our external senses, is a childish play upon words, quite foreign to the point at issue. Is there any one *principle* from which Euclid deduces a single consequence, the evidence of which rests upon *experience*, in the sense in which that word is employed in the *inductive logic*? If there were, *geometry* would be no longer a demonstrative science.

Nor is this all. The truths in mathematics (admitting that of the *hypotheses* on which our reasonings proceed) are eter-

nal and necessary; and, consequently, (as was early remarked, in opposition to Locke's doctrine) could never have been inferred from experience alone. "If Locke" (says Leibnitz) "had sufficiently considered the difference between "truths which are necessary or demonstrative, and those "which we infer from induction alone, he would have per- "ceived, that necessary truths could only be proved from "principles which command our assent by their intuitive "evidence; inasmuch as our senses can inform us only of "what *is*, not of what *must necessarily be* *."

But, even with respect to *facts*, there are certain limitations with which this maxim must be received. Whence arises our belief of the *continuance* of the laws of nature? Whence our inferences from the *past* to the *future*? Not surely from *experience* alone. Although, therefore, it should be granted, as I readily do, that in reasoning concerning the *future*, we are entitled to assume no fact as a *datum* which is not verified by the *experience of the past*, (which, by the way, is the sole amount of *Bacon's* aphorism), the question still remains, what is the origin of our confident belief,

* Si Lockius discrimen inter veritates necessarias seu demonstratione perceptas, et eas quæ nobis sola inductione utcunque innotescunt, satis considerasset,—animadvertisset, necessarias non posse comprobari, nisi ex principiis menti insitis; cum sensus quidem doceant quid fiat, sed non quid necessario fiat.—Tom. V. p. 358. (Edit. Dutens.)

that *past events* may be safely assumed as *signs of those which are yet to happen?* The case is precisely the same with the faith we repose in human testimony; nor would it be at all altered, if, in the course of our past experience, that testimony had *not once* deceived us. Even, on that supposition, the question would still recur, whence is it we conclude, that it *will not* deceive us in future? or (what comes nearly to the same thing) that we give any credit to the narratives of men who existed two thousand years ago? No proposition, surely, can be more evident than this, that *experience*, in the acceptation in which Locke and his followers profess to understand it, can inform us of nothing but what has actually fallen under the retrospect of memory.—Of the truth and importance of these considerations, no philosopher seems to have been fully aware, previous to Mr Hume. "As to past experi-" ence," (he observes) "it can be allowed to give *direct* and " *certain* information of those precise objects only, and that " precise period of time, which fell under its cognizance; but " why this experience should be extended to future times, " and to other objects,—this is the main question on which I " would insist *." What is the proper answer to this question is of no moment to our present argument. It is sufficient, if it be granted, that experience alone does not afford an adequate explanation of the fact.

* See Hume's essay entitled Sceptical Doubts, &c.

In concluding this essay, it may not be altogether useless to remark, the opposite errors which the professed followers of Bacon have committed, in studying the phenomena of matter, and those of mind. In the former, where Bacon's maxim seems to hold without any limitation, they have frequently shewn a disposition to stop short in its application; and to consider certain physical laws (such as the relation between the force of gravitation, and the distance of the gravitating bodies), as necessary truths, or truths which admitted of a proof, *a priori*; while, on the other hand, in the science of mind, where the same principle, when carried beyond certain limits, involves a manifest absurdity, they have attempted to extend it, without one single exception, to all the primary elements of our knowledge, and even to the generation of those reasoning faculties which form the characteristical attributes of our species.

# ESSAY FOURTH.

## ON THE METAPHYSICAL THEORIES OF HARTLEY, PRIESTLEY, AND DARWIN.

WHEN I hinted, in the preceding essay, that the doctrines prevalent in this country, with respect to the origin of our knowledge, were, in general, more precise and just than those adopted by the disciples of Condillac, I was aware that some remarkable exceptions might be alleged to the universality of my observation. Of those, indeed, who, in either part of the united kingdom, have confined their researches to the Philosophy of the Human Mind, properly so called, I do not recollect any individual of much literary eminence, who has carried Locke's principle to such an extravagant length as Diderot and Helvetius; but, from that class of our authors, who have, of late years, been attempting to found a new school, by jumbling together scholastic metaphysics and hypothetical physiology, various instances might be produced

of theorists, whose avowed opinions on this elementary question, not only rival, but far surpass that of the French Materialists, in point of absurdity.

Among the authors just alluded to, the most noted are Hartley, Priestley, and Darwin; all of whom, notwithstanding the differences among them on particular points, agree nearly in their conclusions concerning the sources of our ideas. The first of these, after telling us, that "all our internal feelings, excepting our sensations, may be called *ideas*;—that "the ideas which resemble sensations may be called *ideas of sensation*, and all the rest *intellectual ideas*;"—adds, "that "the ideas of sensation are the *elements* of which all the rest "are compounded *." In another passage he expresses his hopes, that, "by pursuing and perfecting the doctrine of association, he may, sometime or other, be enabled to analyse all that vast variety of complex ideas, which pass under the name of *ideas of reflection* and *intellectual ideas*, into "their simple compounding parts; that is, into the simple "*ideas of sensation* of which they consist †." And in a subsequent part of his work, he points out, still more explicitly, the difference between his own doctrine and that of Locke, in the following words: "It may not be amiss here to take

* Hartley on Man, 4th edition, p. 2. of the Introduction.

† Ibid. pp. 75, 76.

"notice how far the theory of these papers has led me to "differ, in respect of logic, from Mr Locke's excellent Essay "on the Human Understanding, to which the world is so "much indebted for removing prejudices and incumbrances, "and advancing real and useful knowledge."

"First, then, it appears to me, that all the most complex "ideas arise from sensation; and that *reflection is not a dis-* "*tinct source,* as Mr Locke makes it *."

The obvious meaning of these different passages is, that we have no direct knowledge of the operations of our own minds; nor indeed any knowledge whatsoever, which is not ultimately resolvable into sensible images.

As to Dr Hartley's grand *arcanum,* the principle of association, by which he conceives that *ideas of sensation* may be transmuted into *ideas of reflection,* I have nothing to add to what I have already remarked, on the unexampled latitude with which the words *association* and *idea* are, both of them, employed, through the whole of his theory. His ultimate aim, in this part of it, is precisely the same with that of the schoolmen, when they attempted to explain, by the hypothesis of certain *internal senses,* how the *sensible species* received from external objects, are so refined and spiritualiz-

* Page 360.

ed, as to become, first, objects of memory and imagination; and, at last, objects of pure intellection. Such reveries are certainly not entitled to a serious examination in the present age *.

It must not, however, be concluded from these extracts,

* I do not recollect that any one has hitherto taken notice of the wonderful coincidence, in this instance, between Hartley's Theory, and that of Condillac, formerly mentioned, concerning the *transformation of sensations into ideas*. Condillac's earliest work (which was published in 1746, three years before Hartley's Observations on Man) is entitled, Essai sur l'origine des Connoissances Humaines. *Ouvrage ou l'on reduit à un seul principe tout ce qui concerne l'entendement humain.* This *seul principe* is precisely the *assoeiation of ideas*. " J'ai, ce me semble," (the author tells us in his introduction) " trouvé la solution de tous ces problêmes dans la liaison des idées, soit " avec les signes, soit entr'elles."—In establishing this theory, he avails himself of a licence in the use of the words *idea* and *association*, (although, in my opinion, with far greater ingenuity) strictly analogous to what we meet with in the works of Hartley.

Another coincidence, not less extraordinary, may be remarked between Hartley's Theory of the *Mechanism of the Mind*, and the speculations on the same subject, of the justly celebrated *Charles Bonnet* of Geneva.

In mentioning these historical facts, I have not the most distant intention of insinuating any suspicion of plagiarism; a suspicion which I never can entertain with respect to any writer of original genius, and of fair character, but upon the most direct and conclusive evidence. The two very respectable foreigners, whose names have been already mentioned in this note, have furnished another example of coincidence, fully as curious as either of the preceding: I allude to the hypothesis of the *animated statue*, which they both adopted about the same time, in tracing the origin and progress of our knowledge; and which neither seems to have borrowed, in the slightest degree, from any previous acquaintance with the speculations of the other.

that Hartley was a decided materialist. On the contrary, after observing, that "his theory must be allowed to overturn all the arguments which are usually brought for the "immateriality of the soul from the subtilty of the internal "senses, and of the rational faculty," he acknowledges candidly his own conviction, that "matter and motion, however "subtly divided, or reasoned upon, yield nothing but matter "and motion still;" and therefore requests, that "he may "not be, in any way, interpreted so as to oppose the immateriality of the soul *." I mention this in justice to Hartley, as most of his later followers have pretended, that, by rejecting the supposition of a principle distinct from body, they have simplified and perfected his theory.

With respect to Hartley's great apostle, Dr Priestley, I am somewhat at a loss, whether to class him with materialists, or with immaterialists; as I find him an advocate, at one period of his life, for what he was then pleased to call the *immateriality of matter*, and, at another, for the *materiality of mind*. Of the former of these doctrines, to which no words can do justice but those of the author, I shall quote his own statement from his "History of discoveries relating to Vision, "Light, and Colours," first published in 1772.

"This scheme of the IMMATERIALITY OF MATTER, AS IT

* Hartley's Observations, pp. 511, and 512.

" MAY BE CALLED, or rather the *mutual penetration of matter*,
" first occurred to my friend Mr Mitchell, on reading " *Bax-*
" *ter on the Immateriality of the Soul.*" He found that this
" author's idea of matter was, that it consisted, as it were,
" of bricks, cemented together by an immaterial mortar.
" These bricks, if he would be consistent to his own reason-
" ing, were again composed of less bricks, cemented likewise
" by an immaterial mortar, and so on *ad infinitum*. This
" putting Mr Mitchell upon the consideration of the several
" appearances of nature, he began to perceive, that the bricks
" were so covered with this immaterial mortar, that if they
" had any existence at all, it could not possibly be perceived,
" every *effect* being produced, at least in nine instances in
" ten certainly, and probably in the tenth also, by this im-
" material, spiritual, and penetrable mortar. Instead, there-
" fore, of placing the world upon the giant, the giant upon
" the tortoise, and the tortoise upon he could not tell what,
" he placed the world at once upon itself; and finding it
" still necessary, in order to solve the appearances of nature,
" to admit of extended and penetrable immaterial substance,
" if he maintained the impenetrability of matter, and ob-
" serving farther, that all we perceive by contact, &c. is this
" penetrable immaterial substance, and not the impenetrable
" one, he began to think he might as well admit of *penetrable*
" *material*, as of *penetrable immaterial substance*, especially
" as we know nothing more of the nature of *substance*, than

" that it is something which supports *properties*, which pro-
" perties may be whatever we please, provided they be not
" inconsistent with each other, that is, do not imply the
" absence of each other. This by no means seemed to be
" the case, in supposing two substances to be in the same
" place at the same time, without excluding each other; the
" objection to which is only derived from the resistance we
" meet with to the touch, and is a prejudice that has taken
" its rise from that circumstance, and is not unlike the pre-
" judice against the Antipodes, derived from the constant ex-
" perience of bodies falling, as we account it, downwards*."

In the disquisitions on *matter and spirit*, by the same author, (the second edition of which appeared in 1782) the above passage is quoted at length†; but it is somewhat remarkable, that, as the aim of the latter work is, to inculcate the *materiality of mind*, Dr Priestley has prudently suppressed the clause which I have distinguished in the first sentence of the foregoing extract, by printing it in *capitals*.

In one opinion, however, this ingenious writer seems to have uniformly persevered since he first republished Hartley's Theory, that " man does not consist of *two principles* so essen-

* Pages 392, 393.

† Disquisitions on Matter and Spirit, 2d Edit. p. 26.

" tially different from one another as *matter and spirit;* but " that the whole man is of some *uniform composition*;* and " that either the *material or the immaterial* part of the univer- " sal system is superfluous†." To this opinion (erroneous as I conceive it to be) I have no inclination to state any metaphysical objections at present; as it does not interfere, in the slightest degree, with what I consider as the appropriate business of the philosophy of the human mind. I object to it merely, as it may have a tendency to mislead our *logical conclusions*, concerning the origin and certainty of human knowledge. Highly important as the question concerning the nature of mind may be supposed to be, when considered in connection with its future prospects, it is evidently altogether foreign to the speculations in which we are now engaged. The only proposition I insist upon is, that our knowledge of its phenomena, and of the laws which regulate them, is to be obtained, not by looking *without*, but by looking *within*. This rule of philosophising (the most essential of all in this branch of science) is, as I formerly observed, not founded upon any particular *theory*, but is the obvious and irresistible suggestion of those powers of consciousness and reflection, which are the exclusive sources of our information with respect to that class of facts, which forms the appropriate object of our study.

* Preface to Disquisitions, p. 7.

† Ibid, p. 6.

It has become customary, of late, for materialists, to object to those who profess to study the mind *in the way of reflection*, that they suffer themselves to be misled, by assuming rashly the existence of a principle in man, essentially distinct from any thing which is perceived by our senses. The truth is, that while we adhere to the method of *reflection*, we never can be misled by any hypothesis. The moment we abandon it, what absurdities are we apt to fall into!—Dr Priestley himself furnishes me with an instance in point;—after quoting which, I shall leave my readers to judge, which of the two parties in this dispute, is most justly chargeable with the error, of arguing rashly from a gratuitous assumption concerning the nature of mind, to establish a general conclusion with respect to its principles and laws.

"If man" (says Priestley) "be wholly a material being, "and the power of thinking the result of a certain organiza- "tion of the brain, does it not follow, that all his functions "must be regulated by the laws of mechanism, and that, of "consequence, all his actions proceed from an irresistible "necessity?"

In another passage, he observes, that "the doctrine of *ne-* "*cessity* is the immediate result of the doctrine of the mate- "riality of man; for *mechanism is the undoubted consequence of* "*materialism* *."

* Disquisitions, &c. Introd. p. 5.

According to this argument, the scheme of materialism leads, by one short and demonstrative step, to the denial of man's free agency; that is, a mere *hypothesis* (for what materialist can pretend to offer a shadow of proof in its support?) is employed to subvert the authority of *consciousness*, the only tribunal competent to pass any judgment whatever on the question at issue.

It is remarkable, that the argument here proposed by Dr Priestley, with so much gravity, or at least, one extremely similar to it, was long ago introduced *ironically* by Dr Berkeley, in his ingenious dialogues, entitled the *Minute Philosopher*. "Corporeal objects strike on the organs of sense; "whence issues a vibration in the nerves, which, being com- "municated to the soul, or animal spirit in the brain, or root "of the nerves, produceth therein that motion called voli- "tion: and this produceth a new determination in the spi- "rits, causing them to flow in such nerves, as must necessa- "rily, by the laws of mechanism, produce such certain ac- "tions. This being the case, it follows, that those things "which vulgarly pass for human actions, are to be esteemed "mechanical, and that they are falsely ascribed to a free "principle. There is, therefore, no foundation for praise or "blame, fear or hope, reward or punishment, nor conse- "quently for religion, which is built upon, and supposeth "those things."

It will not, I trust, be supposed by any of my readers, that I mean to ascribe to Dr Priestley any partiality for the dangerous conclusions which Berkeley conceived to be deducible from the scheme of necessity. How widely soever I may dissent from most of his philosophical tenets, nobody can be disposed to judge more favourably than myself, of the motives from which he wrote. In the present case, at the same time, truth forces me to add to what I have already said, that the alteration which he has made on Berkeley's statement, is far from being an improvement, in point of sound logic; for his peculiar notions about the nature of *matter* (from which he conceives himself to have * "*wiped off the* "*reproach of being necessarily inert, and absolutely incapable* "*of intelligence, thought, or action,*") render the argument altogether nugatory, upon his own principles, even if it were admitted to hold good upon those which are generally received. It plainly proceeds on the supposition, that the common notions concerning *matter* are well-founded; and falls at once to the ground, if we suppose *matter* to combine, with the qualities usually ascribed to itself, all those which consciousness teaches us to belong to *mind*.

On the question concerning the *origin of our knowledge*, Priestley has nowhere explained his opinion fully, so far as I

* Disquisitions, &c. Vol. I. p. 144, 2d edit.

am able to recollect; but from his reverence for Hartley, I take for granted, that, on this point, he did not dissent from the conclusions of his master. In one particular, I think it probable that he went a little farther; the general train of his speculations concerning the human mind, leading me to suspect, that he conceived our *ideas* themselves to be material substances. In this conjecture I am confirmed by the following remark, which he makes on a very puerile argument of Wollaston, "that the mind cannot be material, because it "is influenced by *reasons*:" In reply to which, Priestley observes, "that to say that *reasons* and *ideas* are *not* things ma-"terial, or the affections of a material substance, is to take "for granted the very thing to be proved *."

But whatever were Priestley's notions upon this question, there can be no doubt of those entertained by his successor, Dr Darwin, who assumes, as an ascertained fact, that "ideas are material things," and reasons about them as such, through the whole of his book†. In this respect, our

* Disquisitions, &c. Vol. I. pp. 114, 115.

† In the very outset of his work he informs us, that "the word *idea*, which has "various meanings in metaphysical writers, may be *defined* to be a contraction, or "motion, or configuration of the fibres, which constitute the immediate organ of "sense;"—(Zoonomia, Vol. I. p. 11, 3d edit.) and, in an *addendum* to the same volume, he compares "the universal prepossession, that ideas are immaterial beings, to "the stories of ghosts and apparitions, which have so long amused the credulous,

English physiologists have far exceeded Diderot himself, who ventured no farther than to affirm, that "every idea must "necessarily resolve itself ultimately into a sensible repre- "sentation or picture." This language of Diderot's (a relic of the old ideal system,) they have not only rejected with contempt, but they have insisted, that when it was used by the Aristotelians, by Des Cartes, and by Locke, it was meant by them to be understood only as a figure or metaphor. They have accordingly substituted instead of it, the supposition, that the immediate objects of thought are either particles of the medullary substance of the brain, or vibrations of these particles,—a supposition which, according to my apprehension of it, is infinitely more repugnant to common sense, than the more enigmatical and oracular language transmitted to us from the dark ages;—while, with all its mechanical apparatus, it does not even touch that difficulty concerning the origin of our knowledge, of which the *images* and *species* of the schoolmen sufficiently shew, that these subtile disputants were not altogether unaware.

Notwithstanding the celebrity of the names which, in the

"without any foundation in nature."—(Ibid. p. 513.) I hope it is almost superfluous for me now to repeat, that, according to the view of the subject which I have taken, I do not ascribe to *ideas* any *objective existence*, either as things *material*, or as things *immaterial*, and that I use this word merely as synonymous with *notion* or *thought*.

southern part of Great Britain, have lent their credit to this very bold hypothesis, I cannot bring myself to examine it seriously; recollecting the ridicule which *Seneca* has incurred, by the gravity of his reply to some of his stoical predecessors, who maintained, that *the cardinal virtues are animals*. Wild and incredible as this ancient absurdity may at first appear, it will be found, upon examination, to be fully as reasonable as various tenets which have obtained the suffrages of the learned in our own times.

I have only to observe farther at present, with respect to the doctrine of the *materiality of our ideas*, that it has by no means the merit of so much originality, even in the history of our domestic literature, as was probably believed by some of its late revivers. It appears, from various passages in his works, to have been the decided opinion of Sir Kenelm Digby; and it is enlarged upon and developed at some length, (though evidently without any wish on the part of the author, to materialize the mind itself,) in a posthumous volume of the celebrated Dr Hooke. The following extract from this last publication, which is now but rarely to be met with, I cannot forbear to introduce here, as an interesting fragment of this sort of *physiologico-metaphysical* speculation; and I may venture to assert, that the hypothesis which it takes for granted is not inferior, either in point of ingenuity, or in the certainty of the *data* on which it proceeds, to that of any one of the three noted theorists referred to above.

"Memory," (says Hooke) "I conceive to be nothing else "but a repository of *ideas*, formed partly from the senses; but "chiefly by the soul itself. I say partly by the senses, "because they are, as it were, the *collectors* or *carriers* of the "impressions made by objects from without; delivering "them to the repository, or storehouse, where they are to be "used. This repository I conceive to be seated in the brain; "and the substance thereof I conceive to be the *material* out "of which these ideas are formed, and where they are also "preserved, when formed, being disposed in some regular "order; which order I conceive to be principally *that* ac-"cording to which they are formed; that being first in or-"der that is first formed, and that next which is next; and "so on continually by succession, from the time of our birth "to the time of our death. So that there is, as it were, a "continued *chain of ideas* coiled up in the repository of the "brain, the first *end* of which is farthest removed from the "centre, or seat of the soul, where the ideas are formed, and "the *other end* is always at the centre, being the last idea "formed, which is always the moment present when consi-"dered. And therefore, according as there are a greater "number of these ideas between the present sensation or "thought in the centre, and any other, the more is the soul "apprehensive of *the time* interposed."

To those who are acquainted with the strong bent of

Hooke's genius towards mechanics, and who recollect that, from his childhood, the art of *watch-making* was one of his favourite studies *, it may be amusing to combine, with the foregoing extract, a remark which occurs more than once in the works of Lord Bacon: "When men of confined scientific pursuits afterwards betake themselves to philosophy, and to general contemplations, they are apt to wrest and corrupt them with their former conceits."——Nor is Hooke the only writer of note, since Bacon's time, who has exemplified the truth of this maxim. Another illustration of it, still more closely connected with the subject of this Essay, occurs in a profound mathematical work (entitled *Harmonics*) by Dr Smith of Cambridge. I shall quote the passage I allude to, in the author's words, as it contains (independently of its reference to my present purpose) a curious hint towards a physiological theory of the mind, founded on the very same hypothesis which was afterwards adopted by Hartley.—"With a view to some other inquiries, I will conclude with the following observations: That, as almost all sorts of substances are perpetually subject to very minute vibratory motions, and all our senses and faculties seem chiefly to depend upon such motions excited in the proper organs, either by outward objects, or the powers of the will, there is reason to expect, that the *theory of vibrations* here given, will not

* See the Account of his Life.

"prove useless in promoting the philosophy of other things "besides musical sounds*."

Among modern philosophers, however, I am acquainted with none to whom Bacon's aphorism applies with nearly so great force, as to the ingenious physician whose hypothesis, concerning *the materiality of ideas*, has led me insensibly into these reflections. The influence of his medical occupations on his habits of thinking, may be traced in almost every page of his works, both philosophical and poetical;—not only in the physiological language in which he uniformly describes our mental operations, but even in his detached theories upon the various incidental questions which he has started. It is sufficient for me to mention, as instances, his account of the mechanical process by which the human countenance is first moulded into *a smile*;—and his theory of *beautiful forms*, deduced from the pleasurable sensations, associated by an infant with the bosom of its nurse. The enthusiastic praise which he bestows on a conjecture of Mr Hume's, that "the "world may possibly have been *generated* rather than creat-"ed†," is perhaps explicable, in part, on the same principle.

The propensity which all men have to explain the intellectual phenomena, by analogies borrowed from the material

* See *Harmonics*, printed at Cambridge in 1749. The preface is dated in 1748.

† See Zoonomia, Vol. II. p. 247, 3d edit.

world, has its origin in an error, differing from that which misled Hooke and Darwin, only in this, that the latter, being the natural result of the favourite, or of the professional habits of the individual, assumes as many different shapes as the pursuits of mankind; whereas the former, having its root in the common principles and common circumstances of the human race, may be expected to exert its influence on the theories of philosophers, in every country, and in every age. The one prejudice would have been classed by Bacon with the *idola specus;* the other, with the *idola tribus.*

But I must not enlarge farther on systems which, whatever may have been the views of their authors, have obviously no logical connection with the problem relating to *the sources of our ideas;* a problem which (as I have repeatedly observed) is to be solved, not by any *hypothesis* concerning the nature of mind, but by an appeal to the phenomena of thought, and by an accurate analysis of the objects of our knowledge.—On these grounds, our attention is naturally attracted to a new and very interesting class of facts, which have been accumulated, of late, with extraordinary industry, as an inductive demonstration of the justness of those principles which I have been endeavouring to controvert; and which have been recommended to public notice, (in *one* instance, at least,) by a much more splendid display of learning and genius, than has been yet exhibited by any of our

metaphysical physiologists. I allude to the philological researches of Mr Horne Tooke.

Before, however, I enter upon any discussions concerning the inferences which these researches have been supposed to authorise, it is necessary for me to take a pretty wide compass, by premising some general observations; the scope of which I am afraid it may be difficult for my readers, at first view, to connect with the inquiries in which we have been hitherto engaged. I shall state, therefore, the whole of my argument at once, as clearly and fully as I can, in a separate Essay.

# ESSAY FIFTH.

## ON THE TENDENCY OF SOME LATE PHILOLOGICAL SPECULATIONS.

## CHAPTER FIRST.

In carrying back our thoughts to the infancy of a cultivated language, a difficulty occurs, which, however obviously it may seem to present itself, I do not recollect to have seen taken notice of by any writer on the human mind; and which, as it leads the attention to various questions closely connected with the main design of this volume, as well as with the particular discussion which has been last under our review, I shall point out and illustrate at some length.

In the case of objects which fall under the cognizance of any of our external senses, it is easy to conceive the origin of

the different classes of words composing a conventional dialect; to conceive, for example, that two savages should agree to call this animal a *Horse*, and that tree *an Oak*. But, in words relating to things intellectual and moral, in what manner was the conventional connection at first established between the sign and the thing signified? In what manner (to take one of the simplest instances) was it settled, that the name of *imagination* should be given to one operation of the mind; that of *recollection* to a second; that of *deliberation* to a third; that of *sagacity*, or *foresight*, to a fourth? Or, supposing the use of these words to be once introduced, how was their meaning to be explained to a novice, altogether unaccustomed to think upon such subjects?

1. In answer to this question, it is to be observed, in the first place, that the meaning of many words, of which it is impossible to exhibit any sensible prototypes, is gradually collected by a species of *induction*, which is more or less successfully conducted by different individuals, according to the degree of their attention and judgment. The connection in which an unknown term stands in relation to the other words combined with it in the same sentence, often affords a key for its explanation in that particular instance; and, in proportion as such instances are multiplied in the writings and conversation of men well acquainted with propriety of speech, the means are afforded of a progressive approximation to-

wards its precise import. A familiar illustration of this process presents itself in the expedient which a reader naturally employs for decyphering the meaning of an unknown word in a foreign language, when he happens not to have a dictionary at hand. The first sentence where the word occurs, affords, it is probable, sufficient foundation for a vague conjecture concerning the notion annexed to it by the author;—some idea or other being necessarily substituted in its place, in order to make the passage at all intelligible. The next sentence where it is involved, renders this conjecture a little more definite; a third sentence contracts the field of doubt within still narrower limits;* till, at length, a more extensive induction fixes completely the signification we are in quest of. There cannot be a doubt, I apprehend, that it is in some such way as this, that children slowly and imperceptibly enter into the abstract and complex notions annexed to numberless words in their mother tongue, of which we should find it difficult or impossible to convey the sense by formal definitions.

2. The strong tendency of the mind to express itself metaphorically, or analogically, on all abstract subjects, supplies

* Hence the logical utility of metaphysical pursuits in training the mind to these inductive processes, so essentially connected with precision in the use of language, and, of consequence, with accuracy of reasoning, in all the various employments of the intellectual powers.

another help to facilitate the acquisition of language. The prevalence of this tendency among rude nations has been often remarked; and has been commonly accounted for, partly from the warmth of imagination supposed to be peculiarly characteristical of savages, and partly from the imperfections of their scanty vocabularies. The truth, however, is, that the same disposition is exhibited by man in every stage of his progress; prompting him uniformly, whenever the enlargement of his knowledge requires the use of a new word for the communication of his meaning, instead of coining at once a sound altogether arbitrary, to assist, as far as possible, the apprehension of his hearers, either by the happy employment of some old word in a metaphorical sense, or by grafting etymologically on some well known stock, a new *derivative*, significant, to his own fancy, of the thought he wishes to impart.

To this bias of the mind to enrich language, rather by a modification of old materials, than by the creation of new ones, it is owing that the number of primitive or radical words, in a cultivated tongue, bears so small a proportion to the whole amount of its vocabulary. In an original language, such as the Greek, the truth of this remark may be easily verified; and, accordingly, it is asserted by Mr Smith, that the number of its primitives does not exceed three hundred*.

* See the Dissertation on Language, annexed to the Theory of Moral Sentiments.

In the compounded languages now spoken in Europe, it is a much more difficult task to establish the fact; but an irresistible presumption in its favour arises from this circumstance, That all who have turned their attention of late, in this island, to the study of etymology, are impressed with a deep and increasing conviction, founded on the discoveries which have been already made, that this branch of learning is still in its infancy; and that the roots of an immense variety of words, commonly supposed to be genuine *radicals*, may be traced, in a satisfactory manner, to the Saxon or to the Icelandic. The delight which all men, however unlettered, take in indulging their crude conjectures on the etymological questions which are occasionally started in conversation, is founded on the same circumstance;—their experimental knowledge of the difficulty of introducing into popular speech a new sound, entirely arbitrary in its selection, and coined out of materials unemployed before. Another illustration of this occurs in the reluctance with which we adopt the idiomatical turns of expression in a foreign tongue, or even the cant words and phrases which, from time to time, are springing up in our own, till we have succeeded in forming some theory or conjecture to reconcile the apparent anomaly with the ordinary laws of human thought.

The view of the subject, however, to which I must confine myself in this Essay, has a reference to those words alone

which, in the progress of philosophical refinement, are introduced to express abstract and complex notions, or to characterize the faculties and operations of the thinking and sentient principle within us. That such words should all be borrowed from things sensible and familiar, was not only the natural consequence of our perceptive powers having been long and incessantly exercised, before reflection began to awaken to its appropriate objects, but was an expedient indispensably necessary towards a successful communication of the thoughts which were to be conveyed. This last remark, which I have already slightly hinted at, and which led me into the short digression which has, for a few moments, diverted my attention to some collateral topics, will require a more ample illustration.

I have stated the difficulty attending the origin of words expressive of things which do not fall under the cognizance of any of our senses; and I have also remarked the disposition of the mind, on such occasions, to have recourse to metaphors borrowed from the material world. It is in this proneness of the fancy to employ analogical language, in order to express notions purely intellectual, that a provision seems to have been made by nature, for an intercourse between different minds, concerning things abstracted from matter; inasmuch as the very same circumstances which open an easier vent to the utterance of the speaker, must necessarily contribute

powerfully (by what Lord Bacon would have called the *abscissio infiniti*) to assist and prompt the apprehension of the hearer. The moment that the terms *attention, imagination, abstraction, sagacity, foresight, penetration, acuteness, inclination, aversion, deliberation,* are pronounced, a great step towards their interpretation is made in the mind of every person of common understanding; and although this analogical reference to the material world adds greatly to the difficulty of analyzing, with philosophical rigour, the various faculties and principles of our nature, yet it cannot be denied, that it facilitates, to a wonderful degree, the mutual communications of mankind concerning them, in so far as such communications are necessary in the ordinary business of life. Even to the philosopher himself, it is probably, in the first instance, indispensably requisite, as a preparation for a more accurate survey of the mind. It serves, at least, to circumscribe the field of his attention within such narrow limits, as may enable him, with greater ease, to subject it to the examination of the power of *reflection;* and, in this way, renders *fancy* subservient to the ultimate correction of her own illusions.

And here, I cannot help pausing a little, to remark how much more imperfect language is, than is commonly supposed, when considered as an organ of mental intercourse. We speak of *communicating,* by means of words, our ideas and our feelings to others; and we seldom reflect sufficient-

ly on the latitude with which this metaphorical phrase ought to be understood *. The truth is, that, even in conversing on the plainest and most familiar subjects, however full and circumstantial our statements may be, the words which we employ, if examined with accuracy, will be found to do nothing more, than to suggest *hints* to our hearers, leaving by far the principal part of the process of interpretation, to be performed by the mind itself. In this respect, the effect of *words* bears some resemblance to the *stimulus* given to the memory and imagination, by an outline or a shadow, exhibiting the profile of a countenance familiar to the senses. The most minute narratives accordingly, are by no means, in every instance, the most intelligible and satisfactory; as the most faithful copies after nature do not always form the best portraits. In both cases, the skill of the artist consists in a happy selection of particulars which are *expressive*, or *significant*.

"Language," it is commonly said, "is the express image "of thought;"—and that it may be said, with sufficient propriety to be so, I do not dispute, when the meaning of the proposition is fully explained. The mode of expression, however, it ought to be remembered, is figurative; and, therefore, when the proposition is assumed as a principle of reasoning,

* Philosophy of the Human Mind, pp. 495, 496, 3d edit.

it must not be rigorously or literally interpreted. This has too often been overlooked by writers on the human mind. Even Dr Reid himself, cautious as he is in general, with respect to the ground on which he is to build, has repeatedly appealed to this maxim, without any qualification whatsoever; and, by thus adopting it, agreeably to its letter, rather than to its spirit, has been led, in various instances, to lay greater stress on the structure of speech, than (in my opinion) it can always bear in a philosophical argument.

As a necessary consequence of this assumption, it has been, not unnaturally, inferred by logicians, that every word, which is not wholly useless in the vocabulary, is the sign of an *idea*; and that these *ideas* (which the common systems lead us to consider as the representatives of *things*,) are the immediate instruments, or (if I may be allowed such a phrase,) *the intellectual tools* with which the mind carries on the operation of thinking. In reading, for example, the enunciation of a proposition, we are apt to fancy, that for every *word* contained in it, there is an *idea* presented to the understanding; from the combination and comparison of which *ideas*, results that act of the mind called *judgment*. So different is all this from the fact, that our words, when examined separately, are often as completely insignificant as the letters of which they are composed; deriving their meaning solely from the connection, or relation, in which they stand to others. Of this a

very obvious example occurs, in the case of terms which have a *variety* of acceptations, and of which the import, in every particular application, must be collected from the whole sentence of which they form a part. When I consult Johnson's Dictionary, I find many words of which he has enumerated forty, fifty, or even sixty different significations; and, after all the pains he has taken to distinguish these from each other, I am frequently at a loss how to avail myself of his definitions. Yet, when a word of this kind occurs to me in a book, or even when I hear it pronounced in the rapidity of *vivâ voce* discourse, I at once select, without the slightest effort of conscious thought, the precise meaning which it was intended to convey. How is this to be explained but by the light thrown upon the problematical term by the general import of the sentence?—a species of interpretation easily conceivable, where I have leisure to study the context deliberately; but which, in the circumstances I have now supposed, implies a quickness in the exercise of the intellectual powers, which, the more it is examined, will appear the more astonishing. It is constant habit alone, that keeps these intellectual processes out of view;—giving to the mind such a celerity in its operations, as eludes the utmost vigilance of our attention; and exhibiting, to the eyes of common observers, the use of speech, as a much simpler, and less curious phenomenon, than it is in reality.

A still more palpable illustration of the same remark presents itself, when the language we listen to admits of such transpositions in the arrangement of words, as are familiar to us in the Latin. In such cases, the artificial structure of the discourse suspends, in a great measure, our conjectures about the sense, till, at the close of the period, *the verb*, in the very instant of its utterance, unriddles the *ænigma*. Previous to this, the former words and phrases resemble those detached and unmeaning patches of different colours, which compose what opticians call an *anamorphosis*; while the effect of the *verb*, at the end, may be compared to that of the mirror by which the *anamorphosis* is *reformed*, and which combines these apparently fortuitous materials into a beautiful portrait or landscape.

In instances of this sort, it will be generally found, upon an accurate examination, that the intellectual act, as far as we are able to trace it, is altogether simple, and incapable of analysis; and that the elements into which we flatter ourselves we have resolved it, are nothing more than the *grammatical elements of speech*;—the logical doctrine about *the comparison of ideas* bearing a much closer affinity to the task of a schoolboy in *parsing* his lesson, than to the researches of philosophers, able to form a just conception of the mystery to be explained.

These observations are general, and apply to every case in which language is employed. When the subject, however, to which it relates, involves notions which are abstract and complex, the process of interpretation becomes much more complicated and curious; involving, at every step, that species of mental induction which I have already endeavoured to describe. In reading, accordingly, the most perspicuous discussions, in which such notions form the subject of the argument, little instruction is received, till we have made the reasonings *our own*, by revolving the steps again and again in our thoughts. The fact is, that, in cases of this sort, the function of language is not so much to *convey* knowledge (according to the common phrase) from one mind to another; as to bring two minds into *the same train of thinking;* and to confine them, as nearly as possible, to the same track.—Many authors have spoken of the wonderful *mechanism of speech;* but none has hitherto attended to the far more wonderful *mechanism* which it puts into action behind the scene.

The speculations of Mr Horne Tooke, (whatever the conclusions were to which he meant them to be subservient) afford, in every page, illustrations of these hints, by shewing how imperfect and disjointed a thing *speech* was in its infant state, prior to the developement of those various *component parts*, which now appear to be essential to its existence. But on this particular view of the subject I do not mean to enlarge at present.

## CHAPTER SECOND.

If the different considerations, stated in the preceding chapter, be carefully combined together, it will not appear surprizing, that, in the judgment of a great majority of individuals, the common analogical phraseology concerning the mind should be mistaken for its genuine philosophical theory. It is only by the patient and persevering exercise of reflection on the subjects of consciousness, that this popular prejudice can be gradually surmounted. In proportion as the thing typified grows familiar to the thoughts, the metaphor will lose its influence on the fancy; and while the signs we employ continue to discover, by their etymology, their historical origin, they will be rendered, by long and accurate use, virtually equivalent to literal and specific appellations. A thousand instances, perfectly analogous to this, might be easily produced from the figurative words and phrases which occur every moment in ordinary conversation.

They who are acquainted with Warburton's account of the natural progress of writing, from hieroglyphics to apparently arbitrary characters, cannot fail to be struck with the similarity between the history of this art, as traced by him, and the gradual process by which metaphorical terms come to be stripped of that literal import, which, at first, pointed them out to the selection of our rude progenitors. Till this process be completed, with respect to the words denoting the powers and operations of the understanding, it is vain for us to expect any success in our inductive researches concerning the principles of the human frame.

In thus objecting to metaphorical expressions, as solid *data* for our conclusions in the science of mind, I would not be understood to represent them as of no use to the speculative inquirer. To those who delight to trace the history of language, it may, undoubtedly, form an interesting, and not unprofitable employment, to examine the circumstances by which they were originally suggested, and the causes which may have diversified them in the case of different nations. To the philologer it may also afford an amusing and harmless gratification, (by tracing, to their unknown roots, in some obscure and remote dialects, those words which, in his mother tongue, generally pass for primitives,) to shew, that even the terms which denote our most refined and abstracted thoughts, were borrowed originally from some object of ex-

ternal perception. This, indeed, is nothing more than what the considerations, already stated, would have inclined us to expect *a priori;* and which, how much soever it may astonish those who have been accustomed to confine their studies to grammar alone, must strike every philosopher, as the natural and necessary consequence of that progressive order in which the mind becomes acquainted with the different objects of its knowledge, and of those general laws which govern human thought in the employment of arbitrary signs. While the philologer, however, is engaged in these captivating researches, it is highly necessary to remind him, from time to time, that his *discoveries* belong to the same branch of literature with that which furnishes a large proportion of the materials in our common lexicons and etymological dictionaries;—that after he has told us, (for example) that *imagination* is borrowed from an optical *image*, and *acuteness* from a Latin word, denoting the sharpness of a material instrument, we are no more advanced in studying the theory of the human intellect, than we should be in our speculations concerning the functions of money, or the political effects of the national debt, by learning, from Latin etymologists, that the word *pecunia*, and the phrase *æs alienum* had both a reference, in their first origin, to certain circumstances in the early state of Roman manners *.

* See Note (O).

From these slight hints, considered in their connection with the subject which introduced them, some of my readers must have anticipated the use of them I intend to make, in prosecuting the argument concerning the origin of human knowledge. To those, however, who have not read Mr Tooke's work, or who, in reading it, have not been aware of the very subtile and refined train of thinking which latently connects his seemingly desultory etymologies, it may be useful for me to select one or two examples, where Mr Tooke himself has been at pains to illustrate the practical application, of which he conceived his *discoveries* to be susceptible, to philosophical discussions. This is the more necessary, that, in general, he seems purposely to have confined himself to the statement of premises, without pointing out (except by implication or *innuendo*) the purposes to which he means them to be applied;—a mode of writing, I must beg leave to observe, which, by throwing an air of mystery over his real design, and by amusing the imagination with the prospect of some wonderful secret afterwards to be revealed, has given to his truly learned and original disquisitions, a degree of celebrity among the smatterers in science, which they would never have acquired, if stated concisely and systematically in a didactic form.

"RIGHT is no other than RECT-*um*, (*regitum*) the past participle of the Latin verb *regere*. In the same manner, our English verb JUST is the past participle of the verb *jubere*.

" Thus, when a man demands his RIGHT he asks only that " which it is *ordered* he shall have.

" A RIGHT conduct is, that which is *ordered.*

" A RIGHT reckoning is, that which is *ordered.*

" A RIGHT line is, that which is *ordered* or directed—(not " a random extension, but) the shortest distance between two " points.

" The RIGHT road is, that *ordered* or directed to be pursued " (for the object you have in view.)

" To do RIGHT is, to do that which is *ordered* to be done*.

" To be in the RIGHT is, to be in such situations or circum- " stances as are *ordered.*

" To have RIGHT or LAW on one's side is, to have in one's " favour that which is *ordered or laid down.*

* The application of the same word to denote a *straight line*, and *moral rectitude of conduct*, has obtained in every language I know; and might, I think, be satisfactorily explained, without founding the theory of morality upon a philological *nostrum* concerning *past participles.* The following passage from the *Ayeen Akberry* (which must recal to every memory the line of Horace, *Scilicet ut possem curvo dig-*

" A RIGHT and JUST action is, such a one as is *ordered* and " *commanded.*

" A JUST man is, such as he is *commanded to be*—qui *leges juraque* servat—who observes and obeys the things *laid* " *down* and commanded."———

———" It appears to me highly improper to say, that God " has a RIGHT, as it is also to say, that God is JUST. For no- " thing is *ordered, directed,* or *commanded* concerning God. " The expressions are inapplicable to the Deity ; though they " are common, and those who use them have the best inten- " tions. They are applicable only to men ; to whom alone " language belongs, and of whose sensations only words are " the representatives to men, who are, by nature, the sub- " jects of *orders* and *commands,* and whose chief merit is obe- " dience."

*noscere rectum)* deserves to be quoted, as an additional proof of the universality of the association which has suggested this metaphor.

" In the beginning of the reign, *Mollana Muksood,* seal engraver, cut on steel, in " the Roka character, the name of his majesty with those of his predecessors, up to " Timur ; and after that, he cut another in the Nustaleek character, with his majesty's " name alone. For every thing relative to petitions, another seal was made, of a " semicircular form. On one side was,

" *Rectitude* is the means of pleasing God :
" I never saw any one lost in *a straight* road."

Ayeen Akberry, Vol. I. p. 67.

In reply to the objection, that, according to this doctrine, every thing that is *ordered* and *commanded* is RIGHT and JUST, Mr Tooke not only admits the consequence, but considers it as an identical proposition.

"It is only affirming" (he observes) "that what is *ordered* "and *commanded* is—*ordered and commanded* *."

With regard to WRONG, he observes afterwards, that "it is "the past participle of the verb to *wring*, *wringan*, torquere. "The word answering to it in Italian is *torto*, the past parti- "ciple of the verb *torquere*; whence the French also have "*tort*. It means merely *wrung*, or wrested from the RIGHT, or "*ordered*, line of conduct."

Through the whole of this passage, Mr Tooke evidently assumes, as a principle, that, in order to ascertain, with precision, the philosophical import of any word, it is necessary to trace its progress historically through all the successive meanings which it has been employed to convey, from the moment that it was first introduced into our language; or if the word be of foreign growth, that we should prosecute the etymologi-

* It must not, however, be concluded from this language, that Mr Tooke has any leaning to Hobbism. On the contrary, in the sequel of the discussion, he lays great stress on the distinction between what is ordered by human authority, and what the laws of our nature teach us to consider as ordered by God.

cal research, till we ascertain the literal and primitive sense of the root from whence it sprung. It is in this literal and primitive sense alone, that, according to him, a philosopher is entitled to employ it, even in the present advanced state of science; and whenever he annexes to it a meaning at all different, he imposes equally on himself and on others *. To me, on the contrary, it appears, that to appeal to etymology in a philosophical argument, (excepting, perhaps, in those cases where the word itself is of philosophical origin) is altogether nugatory; and can serve, at the best, to throw an amusing light on the laws which regulate the operations of human fancy. In the present instance, Mr Tooke has availed himself of a philological hypothesis (the evidence of which is far from being incontrovertible) to decide, in a few sentences, and, in my opinion, to decide very erroneously, one of the most important questions connected with the theory of morals.

I shall only mention another example, in which Mr Tooke

* "As far as we know not our own meaning;" as far "as our purposes are not "endowed with words to make them known;" so far, "we gabble like things "most brutish."—"But the importance rises higher, when we reflect upon the appli- "cation of words to metaphysics. And when I say *metaphysics, you will be pleas- "ed to remember, that all general reasoning, all politics, law, morality, and divi- "nity, are merely metaphysic.*"——For what reason, I must beg leave to ask, has Mr Tooke omitted *mathematics* in this enumeration of the different branches of *metaphysical* science? Upon his own principle, it is fully as well entitled to a place as any of the others.—Diversions of Purley, Part ii. p. 121.

has followed out, with still greater intrepidity, his general principle to its most paradoxical and alarming consequences.

"TRUE, as we now write it; or TREW, as it was formerly written; means simply and merely,—that which is "TROWED. And instead of being a rare commodity upon "earth, except only in words, there is nothing but TRUTH "in the world.

"That every man, in his communication with others, "should speak that which he TROWETH, is of so great importance to mankind, that it ought not to surprise us, if "we find the most extravagant praises bestowed upon TRUTH. "But TRUTH supposes mankind; *for whom*, and *by whom*, "alone the word is formed, and *to whom* only it is applicable. "If no man, no TRUTH. There is, therefore, no such thing as "eternal, immutable, everlasting TRUTH; unless mankind, "*such as they are at present*, be also eternal, immutable, and "everlasting*."

* Mr Tooke observes immediately afterwards, that "the Latin *verus* also means "TROWED, and nothing else." In proof of which he reasons thus: "*Res*, a thing, "gives REOR, i. e. I am *thing-ed*; *Vereor*, I am strongly *thing-ed*; for *ve*, in Latin "composition, means *valde*, i. e. *valide*. And *verus*, i. e. strongly impressed upon "the mind, is the contracted participle of *vereor*."

It was not without some cause that Mr Tooke's fellow dialogist (whom he distinguishes by the letter F.), ventured to exclaim, on this occasion: "*I am thinged!* "Who ever used such language before?"

But what connection, it may be asked, have these quotations with the question about the origin of human knowledge? The answer will appear obvious to those who have looked into the theories which have been built on the general principle just referred to;—a principle which it seems to have been the main object of Mr Tooke's book to confirm, by an induction of particulars*; and which, if it

* I think it proper to quote here a few sentences from Mr Tooke, in confirmation of this remark.

"Perhaps it was for mankind a lucky mistake (for it was a mistake) which Mr "Locke made, when he called his book an Essay on Human *Understanding*; for "some part of the inestimable benefit of that book, has, merely on account of its "title, reached to many thousands more than, I fear, it would have done, had he "called it (what it is merely) *a grammatical essay, or a treatise on words, or on lan-* "*guage.*"——

——"It may appear presumptuous, but it is necessary here to declare my opi- "nion, that Mr Locke, in his Essay, never did advance one step beyond the *origin of* "*ideas*, and the composition of terms."

In reply to this and some other observations of the same sort, Mr Tooke's partner in the dialogue is made to express himself thus:

"Perhaps you may imagine, that if Mr Locke had been aware that he was only "writing concerning language, he might have avoided treating of *the origin of ideas;* "and to have escaped the quantity of abuse which has been unjustly poured upon "him for his opinion on that subject."

Mr Tooke answers: "No. I think he would have set out just as he did, with "*the origin of ideas*; the proper starting-post of a grammarian who is to treat of "their signs. Nor is he singular *in referring them all to the senses*; and in begin- "ning an account of language in that manner."

were admitted as sound, would completely undermine the foundations both of logic and of ethics. In truth, it is from this general principle, combined with a fact universally acknowledged among philosophers, (the impossibility of speaking about *mind* or its phenomena, without employing a metaphorical phraseology) that so many of our late philologists and grammarians, dazzled, as it should seem, with the novelty of these *discoveries*, have shewn a disposition to conclude, (as Diderot and Helvetius formerly did from other premises) that the only real knowledge we possess relates to the objects of our external senses; and that we can annex no idea to the word *mind* itself, but that of *matter* in the most subtile and attenuated form which imagination can lend it.—Nor are these the only, or the most dangerous consequences, involved in Locke's maxim, when thus understood. I point them out at present, in preference to others, as being more nearly related to the subject of this Essay.

To this last sentence, the following note is subjoined, which may serve to shew, in what sense Mr Tooke understands Locke's doctrine; and that, in expounding it, so far from availing himself of the lights struck out by Locke's successors, he has preferred the dark comments of an earlier age.

"*Nihil in intellectu quod non prius in sensu*, is, as well as its converse, an an-
"cient and well known position.

"Sicut in speculo ea quæ videntur non sunt, sed eorum *species*: ita quæ intelli-
"gimus, ea sunt re ipsâ extra nos, eorumque *species* in nobis. EST ENIM QUASI
"RERUM SPECULUM INTELLECTUS NOSTER; CUI, NISI PER SENSUM, REPRESENTENTUR
"RES, NIHIL SCIT IPSE."—(J. C. Scaliger, chap. 66.) Diversions of Purley, Vol. I. pp. 42, 43, 46, 47.

Mr Tooke has given some countenance to these inferences, by the connection in which he introduces the following etymologies from Vossius.

" *Animus, Anima,* Πνευμα and Ψυχη are participles."—" *Ani-*
" *ma* est ab *Animus. Animus* vero est a Græco Ανεμος, quod
" dici volunt quasi Αεμος, ab Αω sive Αεμι, quod est Πνεω; et
" Latinis a *Spirando, Spiritus.* Immo et Ψυχη est a Ψυχω quod
" Hesychius exponit Πνεω."

I have already, on various occasions, observed, that the question concerning the *nature of mind,* is altogether foreign to the opinion we form concerning the theory of its operations; and that, granting it to be of a material origin, it is not the less evident, that all our knowledge of it is to be obtained by the exercise of the powers of consciousness and of reflection. As this distinction, however, has been altogether overlooked by these profound etymologists, I shall take occasion, from the last quotation, to propose, as a problem not unworthy of their attention, an examination of the circumstances which have led men, in all ages, to apply, to the sentient and thinking principle within us, some appellation synomous with *spiritus* or πνευμα; and, in other cases, to liken it to *a spark of fire,* or some other of the most impalpable and mysterious modifications of matter. Cicero hesitates between these two forms of expression; evidently, however, consider-

ing it as a matter of little consequence which we should adopt, as both appeared to him to be equally unconnected with our conclusions concerning the thing they are employed to typify: "Anima sit animus, ignisve nescio: nec me pu-" det, fateri nescire quod nesciam. Illud si ulla alia de re " obscurâ affirmare possem, sive anima sive ignis sit animus, " eum jurarem esse divinum." This figurative language, with respect to mind, has been considered by some of our later metaphysicians, as a convincing proof, that the doctrine of its materiality is agreeable to general belief; and that the opposite hypothesis has originated in the blunder of confounding what is very minute with what is immaterial.

To me, I must confess, it appears to lead to a conclusion directly opposite. For, whence this disposition to attenuate and subtilize, to the very verge of existence, the atoms or elements supposed to produce the phenomena of thought and volition, but from the repugnance of the scheme of materialism to our natural apprehensions; and from a secret anxiety to guard against a literal interpretation of our metaphorical phraseology? Nor has this disposition been confined to the vulgar. Philosophical materialists themselves have only refined farther on the popular conceptions, by entrenching themselves against the objections of their adversaries, in the modern discoveries concerning *light* and *electricity*, and other inscrutable causes, manifested by their effects alone. In

some instances, they have had recourse to the supposition of the possible existence of matter, under forms incomparably more subtile than what it probably assumes in these, or in any other class of physical phenomena;—a hypothesis which it is impossible to describe better than in the words of La Fontaine:

"Quintessence d'atôme, extrait de la lumière."

It is evident that, in using this language, they have only attempted to elude the objections of their adversaries, by keeping the absurdity of their theory a little more out of the view of superficial inquirers; divesting matter completely of all those properties by which it is known to our senses; and substituting, instead of what is commonly meant by that word,—infinitesimal or evanescent entities, in the pursuit of which imagination herself is quickly lost.

The prosecution of this remark would, if I am not mistaken, open a view of the subject widely different from that which modern materialists have taken. But as it would lead me too far aside from my present design, I shall content myself with observing here, that the reasonings which have been lately brought forward in their support, by their new philological allies, have proceeded upon *two* errors, extremely common even among our best

philosophers;—first, the error of confounding the historical progress of an art with its theoretical principles when advanced to maturity; and, secondly, that of considering language as a much more exact and complete picture of thought, than it is in any state of society, whether barbarous or refined. With both of these errors, Mr Tooke appears to me to be chargeable in an eminent degree. Of the latter, I have already produced various instances; and of the former, his whole work is one continued illustration. After stating, for example, the beautiful result of his researches concerning conjunctions, the leading inference which he deduces from it is, that the common arrangement of the parts of speech, in the writings of grammarians, being inaccurate and unphilosophical, must contribute greatly to retard the progress of students in the acquisition of particular languages: whereas nothing can be more indisputable than this, that his speculations do not relate, in the least, to the analysis of a language, after it has assumed a regular and systematical form; but to the gradual steps by which it proceeded to that state, from the inartificial jargon of savages. They are speculations, not of a metaphysical, but of a purely philological nature: belonging to that particular species of disquisition which I have elsewhere called *theoretical history**. To prove that

* See the Account of the Life and Writings of Mr Smith, prefixed to his Posthumous Essays.

conjunctions are a derivative part of speech, and that, at first, their place was supplied by words which are confessedly pronouns or articles, does not prove, that they ought not to be considered as a separate part of speech *at present*, any more than Mr Smith's theory with respect to the gradual transformation of proper names into appellatives, proves, that proper names and appellatives are now radically and essentially the same; or than the employment of substantives to supply the place of adjectives, (which Mr Tooke tells us is one of the signs of an imperfect language) proves, that no grammatical distinction exists between these two parts of speech, in such tongues as the Greek, the Latin, or the English. Mr Tooke, indeed, has not hesitated to draw this last inference also; but, in my own opinion, with nearly as great precipitation, as if he had concluded, because savages supply the want of forks by their fingers, that therefore a finger and a fork are the same thing.

The application of these considerations to our metaphorical phraseology relative to the mind, will appear more clearly from the following chapter.

## CHAPTER THIRD.

THE incidental observations which I have made in different parts of *the Philosophy of the Human Mind*, on the circumstances which contribute to deprive that branch of science of an appropriate and specific phraseology, together with those on the same subject in the former chapter of this Essay, preclude the necessity of a formal reply to the philological comments of Mr Tooke on *the origin of our ideas*. If any thing farther be wanting for a complete refutation of the conclusion which he supposes them to establish, an objection to it, little short of demonstrative, may be derived from the *variety* of metaphors which may be all employed, with equal propriety, wherever the phenomena of mind are concerned. As this observation (obvious as it may seem) has been hitherto very little, if at all attended to, in its connection with our present argument, I shall endeavour to place it in as strong a light as I can.

A very apposite example, for my purpose, presents itself immediately, in our common language with respect to *memory*. In speaking of that faculty, everybody must have remarked, how numerous and how incongruous are the similitudes involved in our expressions. At one time, we liken it to a *receptacle*, in which the *images* of things are treasured up in a certain order; at another time, we fancy it to resemble a *tablet*, on which these *images* are stamped, more or less deeply; on other occasions again, we seem to consider it as something analogous to the *canvas* of a painter. Instances of all these modes of speaking, may be collected from no less a writer than Mr Locke. "Methinks" (says he, in one place), "the understanding is not much unlike a *closet*, wholly shut "up from light, with only some little opening left, to let in ex- "ternal visible resemblances, or ideas, of things without: "*Would the pictures coming into such a dark room but stay there,* "*and lie so orderly as to be found upon occasion,* it would very "much resemble the understanding of a man, in reference to "all objects of sight, and the ideas of them."—In a different part of his Essay, he has crowded into a few sentences, a variety of such theories; shifting backwards and forwards from one to another, as they happen at the moment to strike his fancy. I allude to a very interesting passage with respect to the decay of memory, produced occasionally by disease or old age;—a passage where, I cannot help remarking by the way, that the impression of the writer, with respect

to the precariousness of the tenure by which the mind holds its most precious gifts, has elevated the tone of his composition to a strain of figurative and pathetic eloquence, of which I do not recollect that his works afford any similar example. "The memory, in some men, it is true, is very *tenacious*, "even to a miracle; but yet there seems to be a constant de- "cay of all our ideas, even of those which are *struck deepest*, "and in minds the most *retentive;* so that, if they be not some- "times renewed by repeated exercise of the senses, or reflec- "tion on those kind of objects which at first occasioned them, "the *print wears out*, and at last there remains nothing to be "seen. Thus, the ideas, as well as children of our youth, of- "ten die before us: And our minds represent to us those "tombs to which we are approaching; where, though the "brass and marble remain, yet the inscriptions are effaced "by time, and the imagery moulders away. *The pictures* "*drawn in our minds are laid in fading colours, and if not* "*sometimes refreshed, vanish and disappear.*" He afterwards adds, that "we sometimes find a disease *strip* the mind "of all its ideas, and *the flames of a fever, in a few days, calcine* "*all those images to dust and confusion which seemed to be* "*as lasting as if graved on marble.*" Such is the poverty of language, that it is, perhaps, impossible to find words with respect to *memory*, which do not seem to imply one or other of these different hypotheses; and to the sound philosopher, they are, all of them, (when considered merely as modes of expression) equally unexceptionable; because, in employing

them, he, in no case, rests his reasoning upon the sign, but only upon the thing signified. To the Materialist, however, it may not be improper to hint, that the several hypotheses already alluded to, are completely exclusive of each other; and to submit to his consideration, whether the indiscriminate use, among all our most precise writers, of *these obviously inconsistent metaphors*, does not justify us in concluding, that none of them has any connection with the true theory of the phenomena which he conceives them to explain; and that they deserve the attention of the metaphysician, merely as familiar illustrations of the mighty influence exerted over our most abstracted thoughts, by *language* and by *early associations* *.

Nor must it be forgotten, that, even in pure Mathematics, our technical language is borrowed from the physical properties and affections of matter; a proposition, of which it is unnecessary for me to mention any other proofs, than the terms employed to express the most elementary notions of geometry; such terms, for example, as *point, line, surface, solid, angle, tangent, intersection, circumference;* not to insist on such phrases as, *involutes and evolutes, osculating circle,* and various others of a similar description. The use made of this sort of figurative language in arithmetic, is an instance, perhaps, still more directly to our present purpose; as when we

* See Note (P).

speak of the *squares*, *cubes*, and *fractions* of numbers; to which may be added, as a remarkable instance of the same thing, the application of the word *fluxion* to quantity considered in general.

Notwithstanding these considerations, I do not know of any person, possessing the slightest claim to the name of philosopher, who has yet ventured to infer, from the metaphorical origin of our mathematical language, that it is impossible for us to annex to such words as *point*, *line*, or *solid*, any clear or precise notions, distinct from those which they literally express; or, that all our conclusions, founded on abstractions from the combinations presented to us by our external senses, must necessarily be vain and illusory. It is possible, indeed, that some may be disposed to make a distinction between having a *notion* or *idea* of an object, and being able to treat it as *a subject of reasoning*;—between having a *notion*, for example, of *length without breadth*, and *reasoning* concerning the one dimension without any reference to the other. To this distinction, trifling as it is in reality, I have no material objection to state on the present occasion, as I should be completely satisfied, if it were as scrupulously attended to in the philosophy of mind, as it uniformly is in the demonstrations of the mathematician;—the sensible images presented to the fancy by the metaphorical words employed to denote the internal phenomena being considered as analogous to

*the extension of points*, and *the breadth of lines* in a geometrical diagram; and the same abstraction from the literal import of our words being steadily maintained, in all our reasonings in the former science, which is indispensably necessary to enable us to arrive at any useful conclusions in the latter.

Of Mr Tooke's opinion on the nature of *general reasoning*, we are not, as yet, fully informed; nor has he even explained himself concerning the logical principles of mathematical science. He has, indeed, given us to understand, that he conceived the whole of his second volume to be levelled at the imaginary power of *abstraction*; and towards the close of it, he expresses himself, in pretty confident terms, as having completely accomplished his object: "You have now instances of my doctrine, in, I suppose, about a thousand words. Their number may be easily increased. But I trust these are sufficient to discard that imagined operation of the mind which has been called *abstraction*; and to prove, that what we call by that name, is merely one of the contrivances of language for the purpose of more speedy communication *."

In what manner Mr Tooke connects this very copi-

* Tooke, Vol. ii. p. 396.

ous induction, with the inference he deduces from it, I must confess myself unable to comprehend. For my own part, I can perceive no logical connection whatsoever between his premises and his conclusion; nor do his numerous examples appear to me to establish any one general truth, but the influence of fancy and of casual association on the structure of speech. Not that I consider this as a conclusion of little moment; for of the reciprocal influence of speech on our speculative judgments, I am fully aware; and, perhaps, if I wished for an illustration of the fact, I should be tempted to refer to the train of thought which has given birth to the second volume of the *Diversions of Purley*, as the most remarkable example of it that has yet occurred in literary history.—"Credunt homines" (says Bacon) "rationem suam verbis "imperare, sed fit etiam, ut verba vim suam super rationem "retorqueant."

With respect to *abstraction*, I think it probable that Mr Tooke has fallen into an error very prevalent among later writers,—that of supposing Berkeley's argument against *abstract general ideas* to have proved a great deal more than it does.

That Berkeley has shewn, in the most satisfactory manner, the incorrectness of Locke's language upon this subject, and that he has thrown a clear and strong light on the nature of

*general reasoning*, is now, I believe, admitted by all who are acquainted with his writings. But does it follow from Berkeley's argument, that *abstraction* is an imaginary faculty of the mind, or that our general conclusions are less certain than former logicians had conceived? No one, undoubtedly, can, for a moment, admit such suppositions, who understands what the word *abstraction* means, and who has studied the first book of Euclid's Elements.

On these, and some other collateral points, it is to be hoped that Mr Tooke will communicate his peculiar views more unreservedly, in the farther prosecution of his design:—in looking forward to which, I trust I shall be pardoned, if I express a wish (which I am sure I feel in common with many of his admirers) that he would condescend to adopt the usual style of didactic writing, without availing himself of a form of composition which eludes the most obvious and the most insuperable difficulties, by means of a personal sarcasm, or of a political epigram.

Strongly impressed with the prevalence of errors, similar to those which have misled Mr Tooke to so unprecedented a degree, a philosophical grammarian, of the first eminence, long ago recommended the total proscription of figurative terms from all abstract discussions *. To this proposal

* *Du Marsais.* Article *Abstraction* in the *Encyclopedie.*

D'Alembert objects, that it would require the creation of a new language, unintelligible to all the world :—for which reason, he advises philosophers to adhere to the common modes of speaking ; guarding themselves, as much as possible, against the false judgments which they may have a tendency to occasion *. To me it appears, that the execution of the design would be found, by any person who should attempt it, to be wholly impracticable, at least in the present state of metaphysical science. If the new nomenclature were coined out of merely arbitrary sounds, it would be altogether ludicrous ; if analogous, in its formation, to that lately introduced into chemistry, it would, in all probability, systematize a set of hypotheses, as unfounded as those which we are anxious to discard.

Neither of these writers has hit on the only effectual remedy against this inconvenience ;—to *vary*, from time to time,

* Un Grammairien Philosophe voudroit, que dans les matières metaphysiques et didactiques, on évitât le plus qu'il est possible, les expressions figurées ; qu'on ne dit pas qu'une idée en *renferme* une autre, qu'on *unit* ou qu'on *separe* des idées, et ainsi du reste. Il est certain que lorsqu'on se propose de rendre sensibles des idées purement intellectuelles, idées souvent imparfaites, obscures, fugitives, et pour ainsi dire, a demi-ecloses, on n'eprouve que trop combien les termes, dont on est forcé de se servir, sont insuffisans pour rendre ces idées, et souvent propres à en donner des fausses; rien ne seroit donc plus raisonnable que de bannir des discussions métaphysiques les expressions figurées, autant qu'il seroit possible. Mais pour pouvoir les en bannir entièrement, il faudroit créer une langue exprès, dont les termes se seroient entendu de personne ; le plus court est de se servir de la langue commune, en se tenant sur ses gardes pour n'en pas abuser dans ses jugemens. (Melanges, Tome V. p. 30.)

the metaphors we employ, so as to prevent any one of them from acquiring an undue ascendant over the others, either in our own minds, or in those of our readers. It is by the exclusive use of some favourite figure, that careless thinkers are gradually led to mistake a simile or distant analogy for a legitimate theory.

For an illustration of this suggestion, which I consider as a most important logical rule in prosecuting the study of mind, I must refer to my former work. Obvious as it may appear, I do not recollect to have met with it in the writings of any of my predecessors. It is very possible, that in this my memory may deceive me; but one thing is certain, that none of them has attempted to exemplify it systematically in his own practice.

After these remarks, it is almost superfluous for me to add, that it is, in many cases, a fortunate circumstance, when the words we employ have lost their pedigree; or (what amounts nearly to the same thing) when it can be traced by those alone who are skilled in ancient and in foreign languages. Such words have in their favour the sanction of immemorial use; and the obscurity of their history prevents them from misleading the imagination, by recalling to it the sensible objects and phenomena to which they owed their origin. The notions, accordingly, we annex to them may be ex-

pected to be peculiarly precise and definite, being entirely the result of those habits of induction which I have shewn to be so essentially connected with the acquisition of language.

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THE philological speculations, to which the foregoing criticisms refer, have been prosecuted by various ingenious writers, who have not ventured (perhaps, who have not meant) to draw from them any inferences in favour of materialism. But the obscure hints frequently thrown out, of the momentous conclusions to which Mr Tooke's *discoveries* are to lead, and the gratulations with which they were hailed by the author of *Zoonomia*, and by other physiologists of the same school, leave no doubt with respect to the ultimate purpose to which they have been supposed to be subservient. In some instances, these writers express themselves, as if they conceived the philosophy of the human mind to be inaccessible to all who have not been initiated in their cabalistical mysteries; and sneer at the easy credulity of those who imagine, that the substantive *spirit* means any thing else than *breath*; or the adjective *right*, any thing essentially different from a line forming the shortest distance between two points. The language of those metaphysicians who have recommended an abstraction from things external as a necessary preparation for studying our intellectual frame, has been

censured as bordering upon enthusiasm, and as calculated to inspire a childish wonder at a department of knowledge, which, to the few who are let into the secret, presents nothing above the comprehension of the grammarian and the anatomist. For my own part, I have no scruple to avow, that the obvious tendency of these doctrines to degrade the nature and faculties of man in his own estimation, seems to me, to afford, of itself, a very strong presumption against their truth. Cicero considered it as an objection of some weight to the soundness of an ethical system, that "it savoured of nothing "grand or generous," *(nihil magnificum, nihil generosum sapit)*:—Nor was the objection so trifling as it may at first appear; for how is it possible to believe, that the conceptions of the multitude concerning the duties of life are elevated by ignorance or prejudice, to a pitch, which it is the business of reason and philosophy to adjust to a humbler aim? From a feeling somewhat similar, I frankly acknowledge the partiality I entertain towards every theory relating to the human mind, which aspires to ennoble its rank in the creation. I am partial to it, not merely because it flatters an inoffensive, and perhaps not altogether a useless pride; but because, in the more sublime views which it opens of the universe, I recognize one of the most infallible characteristics, by which the conclusions of inductive science are distinguished from the presumptuous fictions of human folly.

When I study the intellectual powers of Man, in the writings of Hartley, of Priestley, of Darwin, or of Tooke, I feel as if I were examining the sorry mechanism that gives motion to a puppet. If, for a moment, I am carried along by their theories of human knowledge, and of human life, I seem to myself to be admitted behind the curtain of what I had once conceived to be a magnificent theatre; and, while I survey the tinsel frippery of the wardrobe, and the paltry decorations of the scenery, am mortified to discover the trick which had cheated my eye at a distance. This surely is not the characteristic of truth or of nature; the beauties of which invite our closest inspection; deriving new lustre from those microscopical researches which deform the most finished productions of art. If, in our physical inquiries concerning the material world, every step that has been hitherto gained, has at once exalted our conceptions of its immensity, and of its order, can we reasonably suppose, that the genuine philosophy of the Mind is to disclose to us a spectacle less pleasing, or less elevating, than fancy or vanity had disposed us to anticipate?

In dismissing this subject, it is, I hope, scarcely necessary for me to caution my readers against supposing, that the scope of the remarks now made, is to undervalue the researches of Mr Tooke and his followers. My wish is only to mark out the limits of their legitimate and very ample pro-

vince. "As long as the philologer confines himself to the discussions of grammar and of etymology, his labours, while they are peculiarly calculated to gratify the natural and liberal curiosity of men of erudition, may often furnish important data for illustrating the progress of laws, of arts, and of manners;—for clearing up obscure passages in ancient writers;—or for tracing the migrations of mankind, in ages of which we have no historical records. And although, without the guidance of more steady lights than their own, they are more likely to bewilder than to direct in the study of the Mind, they may yet (as I shall attempt to exemplify in the Second Part of this Volume) supply many useful materials towards a history of its natural progress;—more particularly towards a history of Imagination, considered in its relation to the principles of Criticism. But, when the speculations of the mere scholar, or glossarist, presume to usurp, as they have too often done of late, the honours of Philosophy, and *that* for the express purpose of lowering its lofty pursuits to a level with their own, their partisans stand in need of the admonition which Seneca addressed to his friend Lucilius, when he cautioned him against those grammatical sophists who, by the frivolous details of their verbal controversies, had brought discredit on the splendid disputations of the stoical school: "Relinque istum ludum literarium philoso-
"phorum, qui rem magnificentissimam ad syllabas vocant,
"qui animum minuta docendo demittunt et conterunt, et id

" agunt ut philosophia potius difficilis quam magna videa-
" tur *."

* Seneca, Epist. 71.—" Abandon this literary pastime, introduced by men who
" would bring the noblest of all sciences to the test of words and syllables; who,
" by the minuteness of their disquisitions, let down the mind and wear out its powers,
" and seem anxious to invest philosophy with new difficulties, when it ought to have
" been their aim to display her in all her grandeur."

## CHAPTER FOURTH.

ANOTHER mistaken idea, which runs through the theories of some of our late philologers, although of a far less dangerous tendency than that which has been just remarked, is yet of sufficient consequence to deserve our attention, before we close the present discussion. It relates, indeed, to a question altogether foreign to the subject of the foregoing essays; but has its origin in an error so similar to those which I have been endeavouring to correct, that I cannot expect to find a more convenient opportunity of pointing it out to the notice of my readers.

The idea to which I refer is assumed, or, at least, implied as an axiom, in almost every page of Mr Tooke's work; That, in order to understand with precision, the import of any English word, it is necessary to trace its progress historically

through *all* the successive meanings which it has been employed to convey, from the moment that it was first introduced into our language; or if the word be of foreign growth, and transmitted to us from some dialect of our continental ancestors, that we should prosecute the etymological research, till we ascertain the literal and primitive sense of the root from whence it sprung *. Nor is this idea peculiar to Mr Tooke. It forms, in a great measure, the ground-work of a learned and ingenious book on French *Synonymes*, by M. Roubaud; and, if we may judge from the silence of later writers, it seems to be now generally acquiesced in, as the soundest criterion we can appeal to, in settling the very nice disputes to which this class of words have frequently given occasion.

For my own part, I am strongly inclined to think, that the instances are few indeed, (if there are, in truth, any instances) in which etymology furnishes effectual aids to guide us, either in writing with propriety the dialect of our own times; or in fixing the exact signification of ambiguous terms; or in drawing the line between expressions which seem to be nearly

* In one passage, he seems to pay some deference to *usage;*

" Quem penes arbitrium est et jus et norma loquendi;"

But the whole spirit of his book proceeds on the opposite principle; and even in the page to which I allude, he tells us, that " capricious and mutable fashion has nothing " to do in our inquiries into the nature of language, and the meaning of words."—Vol. II. p. 95.

equivalent. In all such cases, nothing can, in my opinion, be safely trusted to, but that habit of accurate and vigilant induction, which, by the study of the most approved models of writing and of thinking, elicits gradually and insensibly the precise notions which our best authors have annexed to their phraseology. It is on this principle that Girard and Beauzée have proceeded in all their critical decisions; and, although it cannot be denied, that there is often a great deal of false refinement in both, they must be allowed the merit of pointing out to their successors the only road that could conduct them to the truth. In D'Alembert's short but masterly sketch on *Synonymes*, he has followed precisely the same track *.

How very little advantage is to be gained from etymology, in compositions where taste is concerned, may be inferred from this obvious consideration, That among words deriving their origin from the same source, we find some *ennobled* by the usage of one country; while others very nearly allied to them, nay, perhaps identical in sound and in orthography, are *debased* by the practice of another. It is owing to this circumstance, that Englishmen, and still more Scotchmen, when they begin the study of German, are so apt to complain of the deep rooted associations which must be con-

* See note at the end (Q).

quered, before they are able to relish the more refined beauties of style in that parent language on which their own has been grafted.

On the other hand, when a word originally low or ludicrous, has, in consequence of long use, been once ennobled or consecrated, I do not well see what advantage, in point of taste, is to be expected from a scrupulous examination of its genealogy or of its kindred connexions. Mr Tooke has shewn, in a very satisfactory manner, that some English words which are now banished, not only from solemn discourse, but from decent conversation, are very nearly allied, in their origin, to others which rank with the most unexceptionable in our language; and he seems disposed to ascribe our prejudice against the former to a *false delicacy* *. I should be glad to know what practical inference Mr Tooke would wish us to draw from these discoveries. Is it that the latter should be degraded, on account of the infamy of their connexions; or that every word which can claim a common descent with them from a respectable stem is entitled to admission into the same society?

May there not be some risk that, by such etymological studies, when pushed to an excess, and magnified in the ima-

* Vol. II. pp. 67 and 134.

gination to an undue importance, the taste may lose more in the nicety of its discrimination, than the understanding gains in point of useful knowledge? One thing I can state as a fact, confirmed by my own observation, so far as it has reached;—that I have hardly met with an individual, habitually addicted to them, who wrote his own language with ease and elegance. Mr Tooke himself is, indeed, one remarkable exception to the general rule; but even with respect to *him*, I am inclined to doubt, if the style of his composition be improved, since he appeared with such distinction as the antagonist of *Junius*.

Nor will this effect of these pursuits appear surprising, when it is considered that their tendency is to substitute the doubtful niceties of the philologer and the antiquarian, as rules of decision in cases where there is no legitimate appeal but to custom and to the ear. Even among those who do not carry their researches deeper than the superficial aspect of our vernacular speech, we know what a deceitful guide etymology frequently is, in questions about the propriety or impropriety of expression. How much more so, when such questions are judged of on principles, borrowed from languages which are seldom studied by any who have made the cultivation of taste a serious object *!

* "Il est si rare que l'étymologie d'un mot coincide avec sa véritable acception, "qu'on ne peut justifier ces sortes de recherches par le prétexte de mieux fixer par-là le

As an *illustration* of this, I shall only take notice of the absurdities, into which we should inevitably fall, if we were to employ the conclusions of the etymologist, as a criterion for judging of the propriety of the metaphors involved in our common forms of speech. In some cases, where such metaphors, from their obvious incongruity, form real and indisputable blemishes in our language, necessity forces us to employ them, from the want of more unexceptionable substitutes; and, where this necessity exists, it would be mere pedantry to oppose to established use the general canons of criticism. My own opinion is, that this pedantry has, for many years past, been carried farther than the genius of the English tongue will justify, and has had a sensible influence in abridging the variety of its native stores of expression; but it is only of late that, in separating the primitive from the metaphorical meanings of words, it has become customary for critics to carry their refinements farther than the mere English scholar is able to accompany them; or to appeal from the authority of Addison and Swift, to the woods of Germany *.

" sens des mots. Les écrivains, qui savent le plus de langues, sont ceux qui commet-
" tent le plus d'improprietés. Trop occupés de l'ancienne énergie d'un terme, ils oubli-
" ent sa valeur actuelle, et négligent les nuances, qui font la grace et la force du dis-
" cours."

See the notes annexed to the ingenious memoir read before the Academy of Berlin, by M. de Rivarol; entitled, *De l'Universalité de la langue Françoise.*

* The argument against the *critical* utility of these etymological researches might be carried much farther, by illustrating their tendency, with respect to our *poetical*

The following principle may, I think, be safely adopted as a practical rule; that, as *mixed metaphors* displease solely by the incongruous pictures they present to the imagination, they are exceptionable in those cases alone, where the words which we combine appear obviously, and without a moment's reflection, to have a metaphorical signification; and, consequently, that when, from long use, they cease to be figurative, and become virtually *literal* expressions, no argument against their propriety can have any

vocabulary. The power of *this* (which depends wholly on association) is often increased by the mystery which hangs over the origin of its consecrated terms; as the nobility of a family gains an accession of lustre, when its history is lost in the obscurity of the fabulous ages.

A single instance will at once explain and confirm the foregoing remark.—Few words, perhaps, in our language, have been used more happily by some of our older poets than *Harbinger;* more particularly by Milton, whose *Paradise Lost* has rendered even the organical sound pleasing to the fancy.

> "And now of love they treat, till th' evening star,
> "Love's *harbinger*, appear'd."

How powerful are the associations which such a combination of ideas must establish in the memory of every reader capable of feeling their beauty; and what a charm is communicated to the word, thus blended in its effect with such pictures, as those of the evening star, and of the loves of our first parents!

When I look into Johnson for the etymology of *Harbinger*, I find it is derived from the Dutch *Herberger*, which denotes one who goes to provide lodgings or a harbour for those that follow. Whoever may thank the author for this conjecture, it certainly will *not* be the lover of Milton's poetry. The injury, however, which is here done to the word in question, is slight in comparison of what it would have been, if its origin had been traced to some root in our own language equally ignoble, and resembling it as nearly in point of orthography.

weight, so far as it rests on metaphysical or philological considerations concerning their primitive roots. In such cases, the *ear* of a person familiarized to the style of our standard authors, ought to silence every speculative argument, how plausible soever it may appear to the theorist, in point of etymological verisimilitude.

In confirmation of this principle, it may be observed, that, among our metaphorical expressions, there are some, where the literal sense continues to maintain its ascendant over the metaphorical; there are others, where the metaphorical has so far supplanted the literal, as to present itself as the more obvious interpretation of the two.

The words *acuteness*, *deliberation*, and *sagacity*, are examples of the latter sort;—suggesting immediately the ideas which they figuratively express; and not even admitting of a literal interpretation, without some violence to ordinary phraseology. In all such instances, the figurative origin of the word appears to me to be entitled to no attention, in the practice of composition.

It is otherwise, however, where the literal meaning continues to prevail over the metaphorical; and where the first aspect of a phrase may, of course, present an unpleasing combination of things material with things intellectual or moral. The verb to *handle*, as employed in the expressions—to *han-*

*dle a philosophical question*—to *handle a point of controversy*—seems to me to be in this predicament. It is much used by the old English divines; more particularly by those who have been distinguished by the name of *puritans*; and it is a favourite mode of speaking, not only with Lord Kames in his Elements of Criticism, but, with a still higher authority in point of style, Mr Burke, in his book on the Sublime and Beautiful.

It is, perhaps, owing to some caprice of my own taste, but I must acknowledge, that I had always a dislike at the word when thus applied; more especially, when the subject in question is of such a nature, as to require a certain lightness and delicacy of style. For many years past, it has been falling gradually into disuse; its place being commonly supplied by the verb to *treat*;—a verb which, when traced to its root (tractare) in the Latin language, is precisely of the same import; but which, in consequence of its less obvious extraction, does not obtrude its literal meaning on the imagination, in a manner at all offensive. In most cases of the same sort, it will be found convenient to avail ourselves of a similar artifice.

"It might be expected" (says Burke) "from the fertility "of the subject, that I should consider poetry, as it regards "the sublime and beautiful, more at large; but it must be

" observed, that *in this light* it has been often and well *handled* " already."—In the following sentence, the use of the same word strikes me as still more exceptionable: " This seems " to me so evident, that I am a good deal surprised that " none who have *handled* the subject have made any men- " tion of the quality of *smoothness*, in the enumeration of those " that *go to* the forming of beauty."

Upon the very same principle, I am inclined to object to the phrase *go to*, as here employed. I know, that the authority of Swift and of Addison may be pleaded in its favour; but their example has not been followed by the best of our later writers; and the literal meaning of the verb GO, when connected with the preposition TO, has now so decided an ascendant over the metaphorical, as to render it at present an awkward mode of expression, whatever the case may have been in the days of our ancestors.*

In forming a judgment on questions of this kind, it must not be overlooked, whether the expression is used as a rhetorical ornament addressed to the fancy; or as a sign of thought destined for the communication of knowledge. On the former supposition, it is possible that the same phrase may offend; which, on the latter, would not only be unexceptionable, but the most simple and natural turn of expression which the language supplies.

I have elsewhere contrasted some of the opposite perfections of the philosophical, and of the rhetorical or poetical style. The former, I have observed, accomplishes its purposes most effectually, when, like the language of algebra, it confines our reasoning faculties to their appropriate province, and guards the thoughts against any distraction from the occasional wanderings of fancy. How different from this is the aim of poetry! Sometimes to subdue reason itself by her syren song; and, in all her higher efforts, to revert to the first impressions and to the first language of nature;—clothing every idea with a sensible image, and keeping the fancy forever on the wing. Nor is it sufficient, for this end, to speak by means of *metaphors* or *symbols*. It is necessary to employ such as retain enough of the gloss of novelty to stimulate the powers of conception and imagination; and, in the selection of words, to keep steadily in view the habitual associations of those upon whom they are destined to operate. Hence, to all who cultivate this delightful art, and still more to all who speculate concerning its theory, the importance of those studies which relate to the associating principle, and to the history of the human mind, as exemplified in the figurative mechanism of language. Of this remark I intend to offer various illustrations in the Essays which are to follow:—but, before entering upon any new topics, it yet remains for me to add a few hints, which have a more particular reference to style in those instances, where the object of the writer is merely to attain the merits of perspicuity and simplicity.

In cases of this last description, the considerations which have been already stated lead me to conclude, that the general rules which reprobate mixed metaphors, ought to be interpreted with a greater degree of latitude than critics are accustomed to allow. I have heard, for example, the phrase *fertile source* censured more than once, as a trespass against these rules. I think I may venture to appeal to a great majority of my readers, whether this impropriety ever occurred to them, when they have met with the phrase, as they often must have done, in the best English authors; nay, whether this phrase does not strike their ear, as a more natural and obvious combination than *copious source*, which some would substitute instead of it. Why, then, should we reject a convenient expression, which custom has already sanctioned; and, by tying ourselves down, in this instance, to the exclusive employment of the adjective *copious*, impoverish the scanty resources which the English idiom affords for diversifying our phraseology*? On the same principle, I would vindicate such phrases as the following;—*to dwell, or to enlarge, on a particular point;* or *on a particular head of a discourse;* or *on a particular*

* If there is any one English word, which is now become virtually literal, in its metaphorical applications, it is the word *source*. Who is it that ever thought of a spring or fountain of water, in speaking of God as the *source* of existence; of the sun as the *source* of light and heat, of *land* as one of the *sources* of national wealth; or of *sensation and reflection*, as the only *sources* (according to Locke) of human know-

*branch of an argument.* Nor do I see any criticism to which they are liable, which would not justify the vulgar cavil against *golden candlestick,* and *glass inkhorn ;*—expressions which it is impossible to dispense with, but by means of absurd circumlocutions. In these last cases, indeed, the etymology of the words leads the attention back to the history of the arts, rather than to that of the *metaphorical uses of speech ;* but in both instances the same remark holds, that when a writer, or a speaker, wishes to express himself plainly and perspicuously, it is childish in him to reject phrases which custom has consecrated, on account of the inconsistencies which a philological analysis may point out, between their primitive import and their popular acceptations.

In the practical application, I acknowledge, of this general conclusion, it requires a nice *tact,* aided by a familiar acquaint-

ledge ;—propositions which it would not be easy to enunciate with equal clearness and conciseness in any other manner ? The same observation may be extended to the adjective *fertile ;* which we apply indiscriminately to a productive *field ;* to an inventive *genius ;* and even to the *mines* which supply us with the precious metals. I cannot therefore see the shadow of a reason why these two words should not be joined together in the most correct composition. A similar combination has obtained in the French language, in which the phrase *source féconde* has been long sanctioned by the highest authorities.

It is necessary for me to observe here, that I introduce this and other examples of the same kind, merely as illustrations of my meaning ; and that it is of no consequence to my argument, whether my decisions, in particular cases, be right or wrong.

ance with the best models, to be able to decide, when a metaphorical word comes to have the effect of a literal and specific term;—or, (what amounts to the same thing) when it ceases to present its primitive along with its figurative meaning: And whenever the point is at all doubtful, it is unquestionably safer to pay too much, than too little respect, to the common canons of verbal criticism. All that I wish to establish is, that these canons, if adopted without limitations and exceptions, would produce a style of composition different from what has been exemplified by the classical authors, either of ancient or of modern times; and which no writer or speaker could attempt to sustain, without feeling himself perpetually cramped by fetters, inconsistent with the freedom, the variety, and the grace of his expression

If these remarks have any foundation in truth, when applied to questions which fall under the cognizance of illiterate judges, they conclude with infinitely greater force in favour of established practice, when opposed merely by such *arcana* as have been brought to light by the researches of the scholar or the antiquary. Considering, indeed, the me-

* The following maxim does honour to the good sense and good taste of Vaugelas.—"Lorsqu'une façon de parler est usitée des bons auteurs, il ne faut pas s'amuser "à en faire l'anatomie, ni à pointiller dessus, comme font une infinité de gens; mais "il faut se laisser emporter au torrent, et parler comme les autres, sans daigner écou-"ter ces éplucheurs de phrases."

taphorical origin of by far the greater proportion of words in every cultivated language, (a fact which Mr Tooke's ingenious speculations have now placed in a point of view so peculiarly luminous), etymology, if systematically adopted as a test of propriety, would lead to the rejection of all our ordinary modes of speaking; without leaving us the possibility of communicating to each other our thoughts and feelings, in a manner not equally liable to the same objections.

END OF PART FIRST.

# PHILOSOPHICAL ESSAYS.

## PART SECOND.

# PHILOSOPHICAL ESSAYS.

## *PART SECOND.*

## ESSAY FIRST.

### ON THE BEAUTIFUL.

#### INTRODUCTION.

In the volume which I have already published on the Philosophy of the Human Mind, when I have had occasion to speak of the *Pleasures of Imagination*, I have employed that phrase to denote the pleasures which arise from *ideal* creations or combinations, in contradistinction to those derived from the *realities* which human life presents to our senses. Mr Addison, in his well-known and justly admired papers on this subject, uses the same words in a more extensive acceptation; to express the pleasures which beauty, greatness, or novelty, excite in the mind, when presented to it, either by the powers of perception, or by the faculty of imagination; distinguish-

ing these two classes of agreeable effects, by calling the one *primary*, and the other *secondary* pleasures. As I propose to confine myself, in this Essay, to Beauty, the first of the three qualities mentioned by Addison, it is unnecessary for me to inquire, how far his enumeration is complete; or how far his classification is logical. But, as I shall have frequently occasion, in the sequel, to speak of the *Pleasures of Imagination*, I must take the liberty of remarking, in vindication of my own phraseology, that philosophical precision indispensably requires an exclusive limitation of that title to what Mr Addison calls *secondary* pleasures; because, although ultimately founded on pleasures derived from our perceptive powers, they are yet (as will afterwards appear) characterized by some very remarkable circumstances, peculiar to themselves. It is true, that when we enjoy the beauties of a certain class of external objects, (for example, those of a landscape,) imagination is often, perhaps always, more or less busy; but the case is the same with various other intellectual principles, which must operate, in a greater or less degree, wherever men are to be found; such principles, for instance, as the association of ideas;—sympathy with the enjoyments of animated beings;—or a speculative curiosity concerning the *uses* and *fitnesses*, and *systematical relations* which are everywhere conspicuous in nature *; and, therefore, to refer

* To these principles must be added, in such a state of society as ours, the numberless acquired habits of observation and of thought, which diversify the effects of the

to imagination alone, our perception of these beauties, together with all the various enjoyments, both intellectual and moral, which accompany it, is to sanction, by our very definitions, a partial and erroneous theory. I shall, accordingly, in this, and in the following essays, continue to use the same language as formerly; separating, wherever the phenomena in question will admit of such a separation, the pleasures we receive immediately by our senses, from those which depend on ideal combinations formed by the intellect *.

Agreeably to this distinction, I propose, in treating of Beauty, to begin with considering the more simple and general principles on which depend the pleasures that we experience in the case of actual perception; after which, I shall proceed to investigate the sources of those specific and characteristical charms which imagination lends to her own productions.

very same perceptions in the minds of the painter; of the poet; of the landscape-gardener; of the farmer; of the civil or the military engineer; of the geological theorist, &c. &c. &c.

* What Mr Addison has called the *Pleasures of Imagination*, might be denominated, more correctly, the pleasures we receive from the objects of *Taste*; a power of the mind which is equally conversant with the pleasures arising from sensible things, and with such as result from the creations of human genius.

# ON THE BEAUTIFUL.

## PART FIRST.

### ON THE BEAUTIFUL, WHEN PRESENTED IMMEDIATELY TO OUR SENSES.

## CHAPTER FIRST.

### GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE SUBJECT OF INQUIRY, AND ON THE PLAN UPON WHICH IT IS PROPOSED TO EXAMINE IT.

THE word Beauty, and, I believe, the corresponding term in all languages whatever, is employed in a great variety of acceptations, which seem, on a superficial view, to have very little connection with each other; and among which it is not easy to trace the slightest shade of common or coincident meaning. It always, indeed, denotes something which gives not merely *pleasure* to the mind, but a certain *refined* species of pleasure, remote from those grosser indulgences which are common to us with the brutes; but it is not applicable universally in every case where such refined pleasures are re-

ceived; being confined to those exclusively which form the proper objects of intellectual Taste. We speak of beautiful colours, beautiful forms, beautiful pieces of music*: We speak also of the beauty of virtue; of the beauty of poetical composition; of the beauty of style in prose; of the beauty of a mathematical theorem; of the beauty of a philosophical discovery. On the other hand, we do *not* speak of beautiful tastes, or of beautiful smells; nor do we apply this epithet to the agreeable softness, or smoothness, or warmth of tangible objects, considered solely in their relation to our sense of feeling †. Still less would it be consistent with the common use of language, to speak of the beauty of high birth, of the beauty of a large fortune, or of the beauty of extensive renown.

It has long been a favourite problem with philosophers to ascertain the common quality or qualities, which entitles a thing to the denomination of *beautiful*; but the success of their speculations has been so inconsiderable, that little can be inferred from them but the impossibility of the problem to which they have been directed. The author of the ar-

* "There is nothing singular in applying the word *beauty* to sounds. The ancients observe the peculiar dignity of the senses of seeing and hearing; that in their objects we discern the Καλόν, which we don't ascribe to the objects of the other senses."—Hutcheson's Inquiry into Beauty and Virtue, Sect 2, § 14.

† See Note (R).

ticle *Beau* in the French *Encyclopedie**, after some severe strictures on the solutions proposed by his predecessors, is led, at last, to the following conclusions of his own, which he announces with all the pomp of discovery;—"That beauty "consists in the perceptions of relations."—"Place beauty "in the perception of *relations*, and you will have the history of its progress from the infancy of the world to the "present hour. On the other hand, choose for the distinguishing characteristic of the *beautiful in general*, any other "quality you can possibly imagine, and you will immediately find your notion limited in its applications, to the "modes of thinking prevalent in particular countries, or at "particular periods of time †. The perception of relations is "therefore the foundation of the *beautiful*; and it is this perception which, in different languages, has been expressed by "so many different names, all of them denoting different modifications of the same general idea."

* Diderot, if my memory does not deceive me.—I do not refer to this theory on account of its merit, for, in that point of view, it is totally unworthy of notice; but because the author has stated more explicitly than any other whom I can at present recollect, the fundamental principle on which his inquiries have proceeded; a principle common to him with all the other theorists on the same subject, of whom I have any knowledge.

† This is the only intelligible interpretation I am able to put on the original. The strictly literal version is:—"You will find your notion concentrated in some point "of space and of time." (Votre notion se trouvera tout-a-coup concentrée dans un point de l'espace et du tems.)

The same writer, in another article, defines Beauty "to be the "power of exciting in us the perception of *agreeable relations*;" to which definition, he adds the following clause: "I have "said *agreeable*, in order to adapt my language to the gene- "ral and common acceptation of the term beauty; but I be- "lieve, that, *philosophically speaking*, every object is beautiful, "which is fitted to excite in us the perception of *relations*." On these passages I have nothing to offer, in the way either of criticism or of comment; as I must fairly acknowledge my incapacity to seize the idea which the author means to convey. To say that "beauty consists in the perception of "relations," without specifying what these relations are; and afterwards, to qualify these relations by the epithet agreeable, *in deference to popular prejudices*,—would infer, that this word is *philosophically* applicable to all those objects which are *vulgarly* denominated deformed or ugly; inasmuch as a total want of symmetry and proportion in the parts of an object does not, in the least, diminish the number of relations perceived: not to mention, that the same definition would exclude from the denomination of beautiful all the different modifications of *colour*; as well as various other qualities which, according to the common use of language, fall unquestionably under that description. On the other hand, if the second, and more restricted definition be adhered to, (that "beauty consists in the perception of such relations *as are* "*agreeable*,") no progress is made towards a solution of the diffi-

culty. To inquire what the relations are which are *agreeable* to the mind, would, on this supposition, be only the original problem concerning the nature of the Beautiful, proposed in a different, and more circuitous form.

The speculations which have given occasion to these remarks have evidently originated in a prejudice, which has descended to modern times from the scholastic ages;—that when a word admits of a variety of significations, these different significations must all be *species* of the same *genus*; and must consequently include some essential idea common to every individual to which the generic term can be applied. In the article just quoted, this prejudice is assumed as an indisputable maxim. "Beautiful is a term which we apply to "an infinite variety of things; but, by whatever circum-"stances these may be distinguished from each other, it is "certain, either that we make a false application of the "word, or that there exists, in all of them, a common quali-"ty, of which the term Beautiful is the sign *."

Of this principle, which has been an abundant source of obscurity and mystery in the different sciences, it would be

* *Beau* est un terme que nous appliquons à une infinité d'êtres. Mais, quelque difference qu'il y ait entre ces êtres, il faut, ou qui nous fassions une fausse application du terme *beau*; ou qu'il y ait dans tous ces êtres une qualité dont le terme *beau* soit le signe.

easy to expose the unsoundness and futility; but, on the present occasion, I shall only remind my readers of the absurdities into which it led the Aristotelians on the subject of *causation*;—the ambiguity of the word, which, in the Greek language, corresponds to the English word *cause*, having suggested to them the vain attempt of tracing the common idea which, in the case of any *effect*, belongs to the *efficient*, to the *matter*, to the *form*, and to the *end*. The idle generalities we meet with in other philosophers, about the ideas of the *good*, the *fit*, and the *becoming*, have taken their rise from the same undue influence of popular epithets on the speculations of the learned.

Socrates, whose plain good sense appears in this, as in various other instances, to have fortified his understanding to a wonderful degree, against the metaphysical subtilties which misled his successors, was evidently apprised fully of the justness of the foregoing remarks;—if any reliance can be placed on the account given by Xenophon of his conversation with Aristippus about the Good and the Beautiful. "Aristippus (we "are told) having asked him, if he knew any thing that was "good?"—"do you ask me (said Socrates) if I know any "thing *good* for a *fever*, or for an inflammation in the *eyes*, "or as a preservative against a *famine*?"

"By no means, returned the other."—"Nay, then, (replied

" Socrates,) if you ask me concerning a *good* which is *good* " *for nothing*, I know of none such; nor yet do I desire to " know it."

Aristippus still urging him—" but do you know (said he) " any thing Beautiful?

" A great many," returned Socrates.

" Are these all like to one another?

" Far from it, Aristippus, there is a very considerable dif- " ference between them."

" But how (said Aristippus) can *beauty* differ from *beau-* " *ty* *?"—The question plainly proceeded on the same supposition which is assumed in the passage quoted above from Diderot; a supposition founded (as I shall endeavour to shew) on a total misconception of the nature of the circumstances, which, in the history of language, attach different meanings to the same words; and which often, by slow and insensible gradations, remove them to such a distance from their primitive or radical sense, that no ingenuity can trace the successive steps of their progress. The variety of these

* Translation of the *Memorabilia*, by Mrs Fielding.

circumstances is, in fact, so great, that it is impossible to attempt a complete enumeration of them; and I shall, therefore, select a few of the cases, in which the principle now in question appears most obviously and indisputably to fail.

I shall begin with supposing, that the letters A, B, C, D, E, denote a series of objects; that A possesses some one quality in common with B; B a quality in common with C; C a quality in common with D; D a quality in common with E;—while, at the same time, no quality can be found which belongs in common to any *three* objects in the series. Is it not conceivable, that the affinity between A and B may produce a transference of the name of the first to the second; and that, in consequence of the other affinities which connect the remaining objects together, the same name may pass in succession from B to C; from C to D; and from D to E? In this manner, a common appellation will arise between A and E, although the two objects may, in their nature and properties, be so widely distant from each other, that no stretch of imagination can conceive how the thoughts were led from the former to the latter. The transitions, nevertheless, may have been all so easy and gradual, that, were they successfully detected by the fortunate ingenuity of a theorist, we should instantly recognize, not only the verisimilitude, but the truth of the conjecture;—in the same way as we admit, with the confi-

dence of intuitive conviction, the certainty of the well-known etymological process which connects the Latin preposition *e* or *ex* with the English substantive *stranger*, the moment that the intermediate links of the chain are submitted to our examination *.

These observations may, I hope, throw some additional light on a distinction pointed out by Mr Knight, in his Analytical Inquiry into the Principles of Taste, between the *transitive* and the *metaphorical* meanings of a word. "As all "epithets" (he remarks) "employed to distinguish qualities "perceivable only by intellect, were originally applied to ob- "jects of sense, the primary words in all languages belong to

* E, ex, extra, extraneus, étranger, stranger.

The very same prejudice which I have now been attempting to refute will be found to be at the bottom of many of Mr Tooke's speculations concerning language.— "Johnson (he observes in the beginning of his second volume) is as bold and pro- "fuse in assertion, as he is shy and sparing in explanation. He says, that RIGHT "means—*true*. Again, that it means—*passing true judgment;* and—*passing a* "*judgment according to the truth of things*. Again, that it means—*happy*. And "again, that it means—*perpendicular*. And again, that it means—*in a great de-* "*gree*."

"All false, (Mr Tooke adds) absurd, and impossible." (Vol. ii. p. 5.)

How far the epithets *false* and *absurd* are justly applied in this instance, I do not presume to decide; but if there be any foundation for the preceding remarks, I certainly may be permitted to ask, upon what ground Mr Tooke has concluded his climax with the word *impossible*?

" them; and are, therefore, applied *transitively*, though not al-
" ways *figuratively*, to objects of intellect or imagination *."
The distinction appears to me to be equally just and important; and as the epithet *transitive* expresses clearly and happily the idea which I have been attempting to convey by the preceding illustration, I shall make no scruple to adopt it in preference to *figurative* or *metaphorical*, wherever I may find it better adapted to my purpose, in the farther prosecution of this subject. It may not be altogether superfluous to add, that I use the word *transitive* as the *generic* term, and *metaphorical* as the *specific*; every metaphor being necessarily a *transitive* expression, although there are many *transitive* expressions, which can, with no propriety, be said to be *metaphorical*.

A French author of the highest rank, both as a mathematician and as a philosopher, (M. D'Alembert) had plainly the same distinction in his view, when he observed, that, beside the appropriate and the figurative meanings of a word, there is another (somewhat intermediate between the former two,) which may be called its meaning *par extension*. In the choice of this phrase, he has certainly been less fortunate than Mr Knight; but, as he has enlarged upon his idea at some length, and with his usual perspicuity

* Analyt. Inquiry, &c. p. 11. 3d edition.

and precision, I shall borrow a few of his leading remarks, as the best comment I can offer on what I have already stated; taking the liberty only, to substitute in my version, the epithet *transitive*, instead of the phrase *par extension*, wherever the latter may occur in the original.

"Grammarians are accustomed to distinguish two sorts " of meaning in words; first, the literal, original, or primi- " tive meaning; and, secondly, the figurative or metapho- " rical meaning, in which the former is transferred to an ob- " ject to which it is not naturally adapted. In the phrases, " for example, *l'éclat de la lumière*, and *l'éclat de la vertu*, the " word *éclat* is first employed literally, and afterwards figura- " tively. But, besides these, there is a sort of intermediate " meaning, which may be distinguished by the epithet *tran-* " *sitive*. Thus, when I say, *l'éclat de la lumière*, *l'éclat du son*, " *l'éclat de la vertu*, the word *éclat* is applied *transitively* from " *light* to *noise*; from the sense of *sight* to which it properly " belongs, to that of *hearing*, with which it has no original " connection. It would, at the same time, be incorrect to " say, that the phrase *l'éclat du son*, is figurative; inasmuch " as this last epithet implies the application to some intellec- " tual notion, of a word at first appropriated to an object of " the external senses."

After illustrating this criticism by various other examples, the author proceeds thus: "There is not, perhaps, in

" the French language, a single word susceptible of various " interpretations, of which the different meanings may not " all be traced from one common root, by examining the " manner in which the radical idea has passed, by slight " gradations, into the other senses in which the word is em- " ployed: And it would, in my opinion, be an undertaking " equally philosophical and useful, to mark, in a dictionary, " all the possible shades of signification belonging to the " same expression, and to exhibit, in succession, the easy " transitions by which the mind might have proceeded from " the first to the last term of the series *."

In addition to these excellent remarks, (which I do not recollect to have seen referred to by any succeeding writer) I have to observe farther, that, among the innumerable applications of language which fall under the general title of *transitive*, there are many which are the result of local or of casual associations; while others have their origin in the constituent principles of human nature, or in the universal circumstances of the human race. The former seem to have been the *transitions* which D'Alembert had in his view in the foregoing quotation; and to trace them belongs properly to the compilers of etymological and critical dictionaries. The latter form a most interesting object of examina-

* Eclaircissemens sur les Elémens de Philosophie, § ix.

tion to all who prosecute the study of the human mind; more particularly, to those who wish to investigate the principles of philosophical criticism. A few slight observations on both may be useful, in preparing the way for the discussions which are to follow.

1. That new applications of words have been frequently suggested by habits of association peculiar to the individuals by whom they were first introduced, or resulting naturally from the limited variety of ideas presented to them in the course of their professional employments, is matter of obvious and common remark. The genius even of some *languages*, has been supposed to be thus affected by the pursuits which chiefly engrossed the attention of the nations by which they were spoken; the genius of the Latin, for instance, by the habitual attention of the Romans to military operations *; that of the Dutch by the early and universal familiarity of the inhabitants of Holland with the details connected with inland navigation, or with a sea-faring life. It has been remarked by several writers, that the Latin word *intervallum*, was evidently borrowed from the appropriate phraseology of a camp; *inter vallos spatium*,—the space between the stakes or palisades, which strengthened the rampart. None of them, however, has taken any notice of the insensible

* "Medium in agmen, in pulverem, in clamorem, in castra, atque aciem forensem."—Cic. de Oratore.

*transitions* by which it came successively to be employed in a more enlarged sense; first, to express a limited portion of longitudinal extension in general; and afterwards limited portions of time as well as of space *. "*Ut quoniam inter-* "*vallo locorum et temporum disjuncti sumus, per literas tecum* "*quam sæpissime colloquar.*" The same word has passed into our language; and it is not a little remarkable, that it is now so exclusively appropriated to *time*, that to speak of the interval between two *places* would be censured as a mode of expression not agreeable to common use. Etymologies of this sort are, when satisfactory, or even plausible, amusing and instructive: but when we consider how very few the cases are, in which we have access thus to trace words to their first origin, it must appear manifest, into what absurdities the position of the Encyclopedists is likely to lead those who shall adopt it as a maxim of philosophical investigation †.

* How remote are some of the following applications of the word from its primitive meaning!—

"Numerum in cadentibus guttis, quòd *intervallis* distinguuntur, notare possu-" mus."—Cic. de Orat.

"Dolor si longus, levis: dat enim *intervalla* et relaxat."—Cic. Acad.

"Vide quantum *intervallum* sit interjectum inter majorum nostrorum consilia, et "istorum dementiam."—Cic. pro Rab.

"Neque quisquam hoc Scipione elegantius *intervalla* negotiorum otio dispunxit." —Paterc.

† A considerable number of the idiomatical turns of French expression have been traced to the ceremonial of Tournaments; to the sports of the field; and to the active exercises which formed the chief amusement of the feudal nobility. See a Disser-

Other accidents, more capricious still, sometimes operate on language; as when a word is transferred from one object or event, to another, merely because they happened both to engross public attention at the same period. The names applied to different colours, and to different articles of female dress, from the characters most prominent at the moment in the circles of fashion, afford sufficient instances of this species of association.

But, even where the transference cannot be censured as at all capricious, the application of the maxim in question will be found equally impracticable. This, I apprehend, happens in all the uses of language suggested by analogy; as when we speak of *the morning of our days; of the chequered condition of human life; of the lights of science;* or of *the rise and the fall of empires.* In all these instances, the metaphors are happy and impressive; but whatever advantages the poet or the orator may derive from them, the most accurate analysis of the different subjects thus brought into contact, will never enable the philosopher to form one new conclusion concerning the nature either of the one or of the other. I mention this particularly, because it has been too little attended to by

tation on Gallicisms (strongly marked with the ingenuity and refined taste of the author) by M. Suard, of the French Academy. Similar remarks may be extended to the English Tongue; on examining which, however, it will be found, (as might be expected *a priori*,) that the sources of its idiomatical and proverbial phrases are incomparably more diversified than those of the French.

those who have speculated concerning the powers of the mind. The words which denote these powers are all borrowed (as I have already observed repeatedly) from material objects, or from physical operations; and it seems to have been very generally supposed, that this implied something common in the nature or attributes of mind and of matter. Hence the real origin of those analogical theories concerning the former, which, instead of advancing our knowledge with respect to it, have operated more powerfully than any other circumstances whatever, to retard the progress of that branch of science.

There are, however, no cases, in which the transferences of words are more remarkable, than when the mind is strongly influenced, either by pleasurable or by painful sensations. The disposition we have to combine the causes of these, even when they arise from the accidental state of our own imagination or temper, with the external objects presented simultaneously to our organs of perception; and the extreme difficulty, wherever our perceptions are complex, of connecting the effect with the particular circumstances on which it really depends, must necessarily produce a wide difference in the epithets which are employed by different individuals, to characterize the supposed sources of the pleasures and pains which they experience. These epithets, too, will naturally be borrowed from other more familiar feelings, to which

they bear, or are conceived to bear some resemblance; and hence a peculiar vagueness and looseness in the language we use on all such subjects, and a variety in the established modes of expression, of which it is seldom possible to give a satisfactory explanation.

2. But although by far the greater part of the *transitive* or derivative applications of words depend on casual and unaccountable caprices of the feelings or of the fancy, there are certain cases in which they open a very interesting field of philosophical speculation. Such are those, in which an analogous transference of the corresponding term may be remarked universally, or very generally, in other languages; and in which, of course, the uniformity of the result must be ascribed to the essential principles of the human frame. Even in such cases, however, it will by no means be always found, on examination, that the various applications of the same term have arisen from any common quality, or qualities, in the objects to which they relate. In the greater number of instances, they may be traced to some natural and universal associations of ideas, founded in the common faculties, common organs, and common condition of the human race; and an attempt to investigate by what particular process this uniform result has been brought about, on so great a variety of occasions, while it has no tendency to involve us in the unintelligible abstractions of the schools, can scarcely fail to throw some new lights on the history of the human mind.

I shall only add, at present, upon this preliminary topic, that, according to the different degrees of intimacy and of strength in the associations on which the *transitions* of language are founded, very different effects may be expected to arise. Where the association is slight and casual, the several meanings will remain distinct from each other, and will often, in process of time, assume the appearance of capricious varieties in the use of the same arbitrary sign. Where the association is so natural and habitual, as to become virtually indissoluble, the transitive meanings will coalesce into one complex conception; and every new *transition* will become a more comprehensive *generalization* of the term in question.

With these views, I now proceed to offer a few observations on the successive generalizations of that word of which it is the chief object of this Essay to illustrate the import. In doing so, I would by no means be understood to aim at any new theory on the subject; but only to point out what seems to me to be the true plan on which it ought to be studied. If, in the course of this attempt, I shall be allowed to have struck into the right path, and to have suggested some useful hints to my successors, I shall feel but little solicitude about the criticisms to which I may expose myself, by the opinions I am to hazard on incidental or collateral questions, not essentially connected with my general design.

## CHAPTER SECOND.

PROGRESSIVE GENERALIZATIONS OF THE WORD BEAUTY, RESULTING FROM THE NATURAL PROGRESS OF THE MIND.—BEAUTY OF COLOURS—OF FORMS—OF MOTION.—COMBINATIONS OF THESE.—UNIFORMITY IN WORKS OF ART.—BEAUTY OF NATURE.

NOTWITHSTANDING the great variety of qualities, physical, intellectual, and moral, to which the word *beauty* is applicable, I believe it will be admitted, that, in its primitive and most general acceptation, it refers to objects of sight. As the epithets *sweet* and *delicious* literally denote what is pleasing to the palate, and *harmonious* what is pleasing to the ear; as the epithets *soft* and *warm* denote certain qualities that are pleasing in objects of touch or of feeling;—so the epithet *beautiful* literally denotes what is pleasing to the eye. All these epithets, too, it is worthy of remark, are applied *tran-*

*sitively* to the perceptions of other senses. We speak of *sweet* and of *soft sounds*; of *warm*, of *delicious*, and of *harmonious colouring*, with as little impropriety, as of a *beautiful voice*, or of a *beautiful piece of music*. Mr Burke, himself, has somewhere spoken of *the soft green of the soul*. If the *transitive* applications of the word *beauty* be more numerous and more heterogeneous than those of the words *sweetness*, *softness*, and *harmony*, is it not probable that some account of this peculiarity may be derived from the comparative multiplicity of those perceptions of which the eye is the common organ? Such, accordingly, is the very simple principle on which the following speculations proceed; and which it is the chief aim of these speculations to establish. In prosecuting the subject, however, I shall not fetter myself by any regular plan, but shall readily give way to whatever discussions may naturally arise, either from my own conclusions, or from the remarks I may be led to offer on the theories of others.

The first ideas of *beauty* formed by the mind, are, in all probability, derived from *colours* *. Long before infants re-

* It is, accordingly, upon this assumption that I proceed in tracing the progressive generalizations of these ideas; but the intelligent reader will immediately perceive, that this supposition is not essentially necessary to my argument. Supposing the first ideas of beauty to be derived from *forms*, the general conclusions which I wish to establish would have been precisely the same. In the case of a blind man, whatever notions he attaches to the word beautiful (which I believe to be very differ-

ceive any pleasures from the beauties of form or of motion, (both of which require, for their perception, a certain effort of attention and of thought) their eye may be caught and delighted with brilliant colouring, or with splendid illumination. I am inclined, too, to suspect, that in the judgment of a peasant, this ingredient of beauty predominates over every other, even in his estimate of the perfections of the female form *; and, in the inanimate creation, there seems to be little else which he beholds with any rapture. It is, accordingly, from the effect produced by the rich painting of the clouds, when gilded by a setting sun, that Akenside infers the existence of the seeds of taste, where it is impossible to trace them to any hand but that of nature.

——————————" Ask the swain
" Who journeys homewards from a summer-day's
" Long labour, why, forgetful of his toils,
" And due repose, he loiters to behold
" The sunshine gleaming, as thro' amber clouds,

ent from ours) must necessarily originate in the perception of such forms or shapes as are agreeable to his sense of touch; combined, perhaps, with the grateful sensations connected with softness, smoothness, and warmth. If the view of the subject which has occurred to me be just, an easy explanation may be deduced from it, of the correct and consistent use of poetical language, in speaking of objects of sight, by such a writer as the late Dr Blacklock.

* The opinion of Shenstone, on a point of this sort, is of some weight. " It is " probable" (he observes) " that a clown would require more *colour* in his Chloe's " face than a courtier."

" O'er all the western sky; full soon, I ween,
" His rude expression, and untutor'd airs,
" Beyond the power of language, will unfold
" The form of beauty smiling at his heart."

Nor is it only in the judgment of the infant or of the peasant, that colours rank high among the constituents of the *beautiful*. The spectacle alluded to by Akenside, in the foregoing lines, as it forms the most pleasing of any to the untutored mind, so it continues, after the experience of a life spent in the cultivation of taste, to retain its undiminished attractions: I should rather say, retains all its first attractions, heightened by many stronger ones of a moral nature.

" Him have we seen, the greenwood side along,
" As o'er the heath we hied, our labour done,
" Oft as the wood-lark piped his evening song,
" With wishful eye pursue the setting sun."

Such is one of the characteristical features in a portrait, sketched for himself, by the exquisite pencil of Gray; presenting an interesting counterpart to what he has elsewhere said of the poetical visions which delighted his childhood.

——" Oft before his infant eye would run
" Such forms as glitter in the muses ray,
" With orient hues."——

"Among the several kinds of beauty," (says Mr Addison) "the eye *takes most delight in colours*. We nowhere meet "with a more glorious or pleasing shew in nature, than "what appears in the heavens, at the rising and setting of "the sun, which is wholly made up of those different stains "of light, that shew themselves in clouds of a different situa- "tion. For this reason we find the poets, who are always "addressing themselves to the imagination, *borrowing more* "*of their epithets from colours than from any other topic* *."

From the admiration of *colours*, the eye gradually advances to that of *forms*; beginning first with such as are most obviously regular. Hence the pleasure which children, almost without exception, express, when they see gardens laid out after the Dutch manner; and hence the justness of the epithet *childish*, or *puerile*, which is commonly employed to characterize *this* species of taste;—one of the earliest stages of its progress both in individuals and in nations.

When, in addition to the pleasures connected with *colours*, external objects present those which arise from certain modifications of *form*, the same name will be naturally applied to both the causes of the mixed emotion. The emotion appears, in point of fact, to our consciousness, simple and un-

* Spectator, No. 412.

compounded, no person being able to say, while it is felt, how much of the effect is to be ascribed to either cause, in preference to the other; and it is the philosopher alone, who ever thinks of attempting, by a series of observations and experiments, to accomplish such an analysis. The following expressions of Virgil shew how easily the fancy confounds these two ingredients of the beautiful under one common epithet. "*Edera formosior alba.*" "*O formose puer, nimium ne crede colori.*" That the adjective *formosus* originally referred to the beauty of *form* alone, is manifest from its etymology; and yet it would appear that, even to the correct taste of Virgil, it seemed no less applicable to the beauty of *colour*.

In another passage the same epithet is employed, by the same poet, as the most comprehensive which the language afforded, to describe the countless charms of nature, in the most beautiful season of the year:

"Et nunc omnis ager, nunc omnis parturit arbos;
"Nunc frondent sylvæ, *nunc formosissimus annus.*"

Similar remarks may be extended to the word Beauty, when applied to *motion*, a species of beauty which may be considered as in part a modification of that of *form*; being perceived

when a pleasing *outline* is thus sketched, or traced out, to the spectator's fancy. The beauty of motion has, however, beside this, a charm peculiar to itself; more particularly, when exhibited by an animated being;—above all, when exhibited by an individual of our own species. In these cases, it produces that powerful effect, to the unknown cause of which we give the name of *grace*;—an effect which seems to depend, in no inconsiderable degree, on the additional interest which the pleasing form derives from its fugitive and evanescent existence; the memory dwelling fondly on the charm which has fled, while the eye is fascinated with the expectation of what is to follow. A fascination, somewhat analagous to this, is experienced when we look at the undulations of a flag streaming to the wind;—at the wreathings and convolutions of a column of smoke;—or at the momentary beauties and splendours of fireworks, amid the darkness of night. In the human figure, however, the enchanting power of graceful motion is probably owing chiefly to the living expression which it exhibits;—an expression ever renewed and ever varied,—of taste and of mental elegance.

From the combination of these three elements (of *colours*, of *forms*, and of *motion*) what a variety of complicated results may be conceived! And in any one of these results, who can ascertain the respective share of each element in its pro-

duction? Is it wonderful, then, that the word Beauty, supposing it at first to have been applied to colours alone, should gradually and insensibly acquire a more extensive meaning?

In this enlargement, too, of the signification of the word, it is particularly worthy of remark, that it is not in consequence of the discovery of any quality belonging in common to colours, to forms, and to motion, considered abstractly, that the same word is now applied to them indiscriminately. They all indeed agree in this, that they give pleasure to the spectator; but there cannot, I think, be a doubt, that they please on principles essentially different; and that the transference of the word Beauty, from the first to the last, arises solely from their undistinguishable co-operation in producing the same agreeable effect, in consequence of their being all perceived by the same organ, and at the same instant.

It is not necessary for any of the purposes which I have at present in view, that I should attempt to investigate the principles on which colours, forms, or motion, give pleasure to the eye. With the greater part of Mr Alison's remarks, on these qualities, I perfectly agree; although, in the case of the first, I am disposed to ascribe more to the mere organic impression, independently of any association or expression whatever, than he seems willing to allow.

The opinion, however, we may adopt on this point is of little importance to the following argument, provided it be granted that each of these classes (comprehended under the generic term Beautiful) ought, in a philosophical inquiry into the nature of Beauty, to form the object of a separate investigation; and that the sources of these pleasing effects should be traced in analytical detail, before we presume to decide how far they are all susceptible of explanation from one general theory. In this respect, Mr Alison's work seems to me to be peculiarly valuable. It is eminently calculated to awaken and to direct the observation of his readers to particular phenomena, and to the state of their own feelings; and whoever peruses it with due attention, cannot fail to be satisfied, that the metaphysical generalizations which have been so often attempted on this subject, are not more unsuccessful in their execution, than they are unphilosophical in their design.

Mr Hogarth and Mr Burke are also entitled to much praise, for a variety of original and just remarks, with which they have enriched this part of the Philosophy of the Human Mind. But although they appear to have aimed at a plan of inquiry founded on the rules of a sound logic; and although their good sense has kept them at a distance from that vague and mysterious phraseology concerning Beauty in general, in which so many of their predecessors delighted,

they have, nevertheless, been frequently misled by the spirit of system; attempting to erect the critical inferences which their good taste had formed in some particular departments of the fine arts, into established maxims of universal application. The justness of this criticism, so far as it refers to Hogarth, has been shewn in a very satisfactory manner by Mr Alison; and it will appear, in the course of our present speculations, that Mr Burke falls, at least in an equal degree, under the same censure. Before, however, I proceed to any comments on the conclusions of this eminent writer, it is necessary for me, in the first place, to follow out, a few steps farther, the natural progress or history of the mind, in its conceptions of the Beautiful.

I have already taken notice of the pleasure which children very early manifest at the sight of regular forms, and uniform arrangements. The principles on which these produce their effects, and which render one regular form more pleasing than another, have engaged the attention of various authors; but it is sufficient for my purpose if the general fact be admitted; and about this there cannot possibly be any room for dispute. With respect to the theories which profess to account for the phenomena in question, I must own, that they appear to me more fanciful than solid; although I am far from being disposed to insinuate, that they are totally destitute of foundation.

The same love of regular forms, and of uniform arrangements, continues to influence powerfully, in the maturity of reason and experience, the judgments we pronounce on all works of human art, where regularity and uniformity do not interfere with purposes of utility. In recommending these forms and arrangements, in the particular circumstances just mentioned, there is one principle which seems to me to have no inconsiderable influence; and which I shall take this opportunity of hinting at slightly, as I do not recollect to have seen it anywhere applied to questions of criticism. The principle I allude to is, that of the *sufficient reason*, of which so much use is made, (and in my opinion sometimes very erroneously made) in the philosophy of Leibnitz. What is it that, in any thing which is merely ornamental, and which, at the same time, does not profess to be an imitation of nature, renders irregular forms displeasing? Is it not, at least *in part*, that irregularities are infinite; and that no circumstance can be imagined which should have decided the choice of the artist in favour of that particular figure which he has selected? The variety of regular figures (it must be acknowledged) is infinite also; but supposing the choice to be once fixed about the *number* of sides, no apparent caprice of the artist in adjusting their relative proportions, presents a disagreeable and inexplicable puzzle to the spectator. Is it not also owing, *in part*, to this, that in things merely ornamental, where no

use, even the most trifling is intended, the circular form possesses a superiority over all others?

In a house, which is completely detached from all other buildings, and which stands on a perfectly level foundation, why are we offended when the door is not placed exactly in the middle; or when there is a window on one side of the door, and none corresponding to it on the other? Is it not that we are at a loss to conceive how the choice of the architect could be thus determined, where all circumstances appear to be so exactly alike? This disagreeable effect is, in a great measure, removed, the moment any purpose of utility is discovered; or even when the contiguity of other houses, or some peculiarity in the shape of ground, allows us to imagine, that some reasonable motive may have existed in the artist's mind, though we may be unable to trace it. An irregular castellated edifice, set down on a dead flat, conveys an idea of whim or of folly in the designer; and it would convey this idea still more strongly than it does, were it not that the imitation of something else, which we have previously seen with pleasure, makes the absurdity less revolting. The same, or yet greater irregularity, would not only satisfy, but delight the eye, in an ancient citadel, whose ground-work and elevations followed the rugged surface and fantastic projections of the rock on which it is built. The oblique position of a window in a house, would be intolerable; but utility, or rather ne-

cessity, reconciles the eye to it at once, in the cabin of a ship.

In hanging up against the wall of an apartment a number of pictures, of different forms and sizes, the same consideration will be found to determine the propriety of the arrangement. A picture placed near one extremity of the wall will require a companion at the same distance from the other, and in the same horizontal line; and if there is any one which, in point of shape or size, is *unique*, it must be placed somewhere in the vertical line, which is equally distant from both.

Numberless other illustrations of this principle crowd on me; but I have already said enough to explain the notion which I annex to it, and perhaps more than, to some of my readers, its importance may appear to justify.

The remarks which have now been made, apply, as is obvious, to the works of man alone. In those of Nature, impressed, as they are everywhere, with the signatures of Almighty Power, and of Unfathomable Design, we do not look for that obvious uniformity of plan which we expect to find in the productions of beings endowed with the same faculties, and actuated by the same motives as ourselves. A deviation from uniformity, on the contrary, in the grand outlines sketched

by *her* hand, appears perfectly suited to that *infinity* which is associated, in our conceptions, with all her operations; while it enhances, to an astonishing degree, the delight arising from the regularity which, in her minuter details, she everywhere scatters in such inexhaustible profusion.

It is, indeed, by very slow degrees, that this taste for natural beauty is formed; the first impulse of youth prompting it (as I before hinted) to subject nature to rules borrowed from the arts of human life. When such a taste, however, is at length acquired, the former not only appears false, but ludicrous; and perishes of itself, without any danger of again reviving.——The associations, on the other hand, by which the love of nature is strengthened, having their root in far higher and nobler principles of the mind than those attached to the puerile judgments which they gradually supplant, are invariably confirmed more and more, in proportion to the advancement of reason, and the enlargement of experience.

The traces of art, which formerly lent an additional charm to the natural beauties which it was employed to heighten, become now themselves offensive, wherever they appear; and even when it has been successfully exerted in supplying defects and correcting blemishes, the effect is destroyed, in proportion as its interposition is visible. The last stage of taste,

therefore, in the progress of its improvement, leads to the admiration of what Martial calls—*Rus verum et barbarum;*

> ——————" Where, if Art
> " E'er dar'd to tread, 'twas with unsandal'd foot,
> " Printless, as if the place were holy ground."

To analyse the different ingredients of the Beauty which scenery of this kind presents to an eye qualified to enjoy it, is a task which I do not mean to attempt; perhaps a task to which the faculties of man are not completely adequate. Not that this furnishes any objection to the inquiry, or diminishes the value of such approximations to the truth, as we are able to establish on a solid induction. But I confess it appears to me, that few of our best writers on the subject have been sufficiently aware of its difficulty; and that they have all shewn a disposition to bestow upon observations, collected from particular classes of facts, (and perhaps accurately and happily collected from these) a universality of application little suited to the multiplicity and variety of the phenomena which they profess to explain *. That this remark is not hazarded rashly, will, if I do not deceive myself, appear sufficiently from the critical strictures on some of Mr Burke's principles which I find it necessary to introduce

* See Note (S).

here, in order to obviate certain objections which are likely to occur to his followers, against the general scope of the foregoing doctrines. The digression may appear long to some of my readers; but I could not hope to engage any attention to the sequel of these discussions, till I had first endeavoured to remove the chief stumbling-blocks, which a theory, recommended by so illustrious a name, has thrown in my way. In the animadversions, besides, which I have to offer on Mr Burke, I flatter myself I shall have an opportunity of unfolding my own ideas more clearly and fully, than I could have done by stating them at once in a connected and didactic form.

## CHAPTER THIRD.

### REMARKS ON SOME OF MR BURKE'S PRINCIPLES WHICH DO NOT AGREE WITH THE FOREGOING CONCLUSIONS.

AMONG the various writers who have turned their attention to the Beautiful, with a design to trace the origin, and to define the nature of that idea, there is, perhaps, none who has engaged in the inquiry with views more comprehensive and just than Mr Burke; but, even with respect to him, it may be fairly questioned, if any one of the conclusions to which he has been led concerning the *causes of beauty*, amounts to more than a critical inference, applicable to some particular class or classes of the phenomena in question.

In examining the opinions of this author, it seems to me extremely worthy of observation, that although his good sense has resisted completely the metaphysical mysteries of the schools, he has suffered himself to be led astray by a

predilection for that hypothetical physiology concerning the connection between mind and matter, which has become so fashionable of late years *. His generalizations, too, proceed on an assumption, not indeed so unlimited as that already quoted from the *Encyclopedia*, but yet much more extensive than the nature of the subject will admit of;—That, in the objects of all our different external senses, there is some common quality to which the epithet Beautiful may be applied; and that this epithet, in all these different cases, conveys the same meaning. Instead, for example, of supposing (agreeably to the doctrine which I have already suggested) that the epithet in question is applied to *colours* and to *forms*, in consequence of their both producing their pleasing effects through the medium of the same organ, he endeavours to shew, that there is an *analogy* between these two classes of our pleasures; or, to use his own words, that "the beauty "both of *shape* and *colouring*, are as nearly related as we can

* This sort of philosophy was much in vogue, all over Europe, about the time when Mr Burke's book first appeared;—in consequence, perhaps, chiefly of the enthusiastic admiration everywhere excited by the Spirit of Laws, then recently published. The microscopical observations on the papillæ of a sheep's tongue, to which Montesquieu has there appealed in his reasonings concerning the operation of physical causes on the mind, bear a remarkable resemblance to some of the *data* assumed by Mr Burke in his physiological conclusions with respect to our perception of the beautiful. Something, also, which looks like an imitation of the same great man, is observable in the extreme shortness and abruptness of the sections, which incessantly interrupt the natural flow of Mr Burke's composition.

" well suppose it possible for things of such different na-
" tures to be *." In both cases, he asserts, that the beautiful object has a tendency to produce *an agreeable relaxation in the fibres;* and it is in this tendency that he conceives the essence of the Beautiful to consist. In farther illustration of this, he observes, " that *smooth* things are relaxing; that *sweet* things, " which are the *smooth* of taste, are relaxing too; and that " *sweet smells*, which bear a great affinity to *sweet tastes*, relax " very remarkably." He adds, that " we often apply " the quality of *sweetness* metaphorically to *visual* objects;" after which observation, he proposes, " for the better carrying " on this *remarkable analogy of the senses*, to call *sweetness the* " *beautiful of the taste*."

In order to convey a still more adequate idea of Mr Burke's mode of philosophizing on this subject, I shall quote a few of his remarks on the causes, " why smoothness and " sweetness are beautiful." The quotation is longer than I could have wished; but I was unwilling to attempt an abridgment of it in my own words, from my anxiety that his reasoning should have all the advantages which it may derive from his peculiar felicity of expression.

" There can be no doubt, that bodies which are rough

* Part III. sect. 17.

" and angular, rouse and vellicate the organs of feeling;
" causing a sense of pain, which consists in the violent ten-
" sion or contraction of the muscular fibres. On the contra-
" ry, the application of smooth bodies relax:—gentle strok-
" ing with a smooth hand allays violent pains and cramps,
" and relaxes the suffering parts from their unnatural ten-
" sion; and it has, therefore, very often, no mean effect in
" removing swellings and obstructions. The sense of feeling
" is highly gratified with smooth bodies. A bed smoothly
" laid and soft, that is, where the resistance is every way
" inconsiderable, is a great luxury; disposing to an univer-
" sal relaxation, and inducing, beyond any thing else, that
" species of it called sleep.

" Nor is it only in the touch that smooth bodies cause
" positive pleasure by relaxation. In the smell and taste we
" find all things agreeable to them, and which are commonly
" called sweet, to be of a smooth nature *, and that they all

* In this part of his theory, Mr Burke has very closely followed Lucretius, whose fancy anticipated the same hypothesis, without the aid of microscopical observation.

" Huc accedit, uti mellis lactisque liquores
" Jucundo sensu linguæ, tractentur in ore;
" At contrà tetra absinthi natura, ferique
" Centauri fœdo pertorquent ora sapore:
" Ut facilè agnoscas è lævibus, atque rotundis

" evidently tend to relax their respective sensories. Let us " first consider the taste. Since it is most easy to inquire in- " to the properties of liquids, and since all things seem to " want a fluid vehicle to make them tasted at all, I intend " rather to consider the liquid than the solid parts of our " food. The vehicles of all tastes are water and oil. And " what determines the taste, is some salt which affects va- " riously, according to its nature, or its manner of being " combined with other things. Water and oil, simply con- " sidered, are capable of giving some pleasure to the taste. " Water, when simple, is insipid, inodorous, colourless, and " smooth; it is found, when not cold, to be a great resolver " of spasms, and lubricator of the fibres: this power it pro- " bably owes to its smoothness. For, as fluidity depends, " according to the most general opinion, on the roundness, " smoothness, and weak cohesion of the component parts of " any body, and, as water acts merely as a simple fluid, it fol- " lows, that the cause of its fluidity is likewise the cause of its " relaxing quality; namely, the smoothness and slippery tex-

" Esse ea, quæ sensus jucundè tangere possunt.
" At contrà, quæ amara, atque aspera, cunque videntur,
" Hæc magis hamatis inter se nexa teneri;
" Proptereaque solere vias rescindere nostris
" Sensibus, introituque suo perrumpere corpus.
" Omnia postremo," &c.

Lucret. Lib. II. l. 398.

The continuation of the passage is not less curious.

" ture of its parts. The other fluid vehicle of tastes is oil. " This too, when simple, is insipid, inodorous, colourless, and " smooth to the touch and taste. It is smoother than wa- " ter, and, in many cases, yet more relaxing. Oil is, in " some degree, pleasant to the eye, the touch, and the taste; " insipid as it is. Water is not so grateful; which I do not " know on what principle to account for, other than that " water is not so soft and smooth. Suppose, that to this oil, " or water, were added a certain quantity of a specific salt, " which had a power of putting the nervous *papillæ* of the " tongue in a gentle vibratory motion; as suppose sugar dis- " solved in it; the smoothness of the oil, and the vibratory " power of the salt, cause the sense we call sweetness. In " all sweet bodies, sugar, or a substance very little different " from sugar, is constantly found; every species of salt, ex- " amined by the microscope, has its own distinct, regular, in- " variable form. That of nitre is a pointed oblong; that of " sea-salt an exact cube; that of sugar a perfect globe. If " you have tried how smooth globular bodies, as the marbles " with which boys amuse themselves, have affected the " touch, when they are rolled backward and forward, and " over one another, you will easily conceive, how sweetness, " which consists in a salt of such nature, affects the taste; " for a single globe, (though somewhat pleasant to the feel- " ing) yet, by the regularity of its form, and the somewhat " too sudden deviation of its parts from a right line, it is

" nothing near so pleasant to the touch as several globes,
" where the hand gently rises to one, and falls to another;
" and this pleasure is greatly increased, if the globes are in
" motion, and sliding over one another; for this soft variety
" prevents that weariness, which the uniform disposition of
" the several globes would otherwise produce. Thus, in
" sweet liquors, the parts of the fluid vehicle, though most
" probably round, are yet so minute, as to conceal the figure of
" their component parts from the nicest inquisition of the mi-
" croscrope; and consequently, being so excessively minute,
" they have a sort of flat simplicity to the taste, resembling the
" effects of plain smooth bodies to the touch; for if a body be
" composed of round parts, excessively small, and packed
" pretty closely together, the surface will be both to the sight
" and touch, as if it were nearly plain and smooth. It is clear,
" from their unveiling their figure to the microscope, that the
" particles of sugar are considerably larger than those of water
" or oil; and consequently, that their effects, from their
" roundness, will be more distinct and palpable to the ner-
" vous papillæ of that nice organ the tongue. They will in-
" duce that sense, called sweetness, which, in a weak manner,
" we discover in oil, and in a yet weaker in water; for, insi-
" pid as they are, water and oil are, in some degree, sweet;
" and it may be observed, that insipid things of all kinds ap-
" proach more nearly to the nature of sweetness, than to that
" of any other taste.

"In the other senses, we have remarked that smooth things "are relaxing. Now, it ought to appear, that sweet things, "which are the smooth of taste, are relaxing too."——"That "sweet things are generally relaxing, is evident, because all "such, especially those which are most oily, taken frequent- "ly, and in a large quantity, very much enfeeble the tone of "the stomach. Sweet smells, which bear a great affinity to "sweet tastes, relax very remarkably. The smell of flowers "disposes people to drowsiness; and this relaxing effect is "further apparent from the prejudice which people of weak "nerves receive from their use."

If this theory of Mr Burke had led to no practical consequences, I should not have thought it worth while, notwithstanding its repugnance to my own opinions, to have made any reference to it here; but as it is intimately connected with some of his subsequent conclusions concerning Beauty, which I consider as not only unsound in their logical foundation, but as calculated to bias and mislead the Taste, I was anxious, before proceeding to an examination of these, to satisfy my readers, how little support they derive from the hypothetical disquisitions premised to them, in order to prepare the way for their more easy admission. As for the physiological discussion itself, I am inclined to think, that few, even of Mr Burke's most partial admirers, will *now* be disposed to estimate its merits very highly. By some

others, I would willingly believe, that it may be valued chiefly as an illustration of the absurdities in which men of the most exalted genius are sure to involve themselves, the moment they lose sight, in their inquiries concerning the human mind, of the sober rules of experimental science.

# CHAPTER FOURTH.

CONTINUATION OF THE CRITICAL STRICTURES ON MR BURKE'S FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES CONCERNING BEAUTY.—INFLUENCE OF THESE PRINCIPLES ON THE SPECULATIONS OF MR PRICE.

In enumerating the qualities *constantly* observable in beautiful objects, Mr Burke lays a peculiar stress on that of *smoothness*; "a quality" (he observes) "so essential to beauty, "that he cannot recollect any thing beautiful that is not "smooth. In trees and flowers, smooth leaves are beautiful; "smooth slopes of earth in gardens; smooth streams in land-"scapes; smooth coats of birds and beasts in animal beauty; "in fine women, smooth skins; and, in several sorts of orna-"mental furniture, smooth and polished surfaces. A very con-"siderable part of the effect of beauty is owing to this quality; "indeed the most considerable. For, take any beautiful object,

" and give it a broken and rugged surface, and however well " formed it may be in other respects, it pleases no longer. " Whereas, let it want ever so many of the other constitu- " ents, if it wants not this, it becomes more pleasing than al- " most all the others without it. This seems to me" (continues Mr Burke) "so evident, that I am a good deal surprised " that none who have handled the subject, have made any " mention of the quality of smoothness, in the enumeration of " those that go to the forming of beauty. For, indeed, any " rugged, any sudden projection, any sharp angle, is, in the " highest degree, contrary to that idea."

These observations contain the whole of Mr Burke's doctrine on this essential constituent of beauty; and, I confess, I cannot recollect any philosophical conclusion whatever, more erroneous in itself, or more feebly supported.

That the smoothness of many objects is *one* constituent of their beauty, cannot be disputed. In consequence of that intimate association which is formed in the mind between the perceptions of sight and those of touch, it is reasonable to expect, that those qualities which give pleasure to the latter sense, should also be agreeable to the former. Hence the agreeable impression which the eye receives from all those smooth objects about which the sense of touch is habitually conversant; and hence, in such instances, the unpleasant ap-

pearance of ruggedness, or of asperity. The agreeable effect, too, of smoothness is often heightened by its reflecting so copiously the rays of light; as in the surface of water, in polished mirrors, and in the fine kinds of wood employed in ornamental furniture. In some instances, besides, as in the last now mentioned, smoothness derives an additional recommendation from its being considered as a mark of finished work, and of a skilful artist *.

To all this we may add, that the ideas of beauty formed by our sex, are warped, not a little, by the notions we are led to entertain concerning the charms of the other. That in female beauty, a smooth skin is an essential ingredient, must be granted in favour of Mr Burke's theory: Nor is it at all difficult to conceive how this association may influence our taste in various other instances †.

* In general, we consider *roughness* as characterizing the productions of nature; *smoothness*, as the effect of human industry. I speak of those natural productions which were intended to furnish the materials of our various arts. In other cases, as in the plumage of birds, the glossy skins of many quadrupeds, &c. &c. Nature has given to her own work a finished perfection, which no art can rival.

By an easy metaphor, we transfer these words to human character. We speak of *rough good sense* as familiarly as of *a rough diamond*; while to the artificial manners formed by the intercourse of the world, we apply the epithets *smooth*, *polished*, *polite*.

† The idea of *female beauty* was evidently uppermost in Mr Burke's mind, when he wrote his book; and it is from an induction, confined almost exclusively to the

Still, however, Mr Burke's general proposition is very far from holding universally. In objects which have little or no relation to the sense of touch, it fails in numberless instances. What more beautiful objects in nature, than the stalk and buds of the moss-rose! To the sense of touch they are positively disagreeable; but we think of them only with a re-

qualities which enter into its composition, that he draws the whole of his inferences with respect to *beauty in general.* Even in treating of the beauty of Nature, his imagination always delights to repose on her softest and most feminine features; or, to use his own language, on "such qualities as induce in us a sense of tenderness and af-"fection, or some other passion the most nearly resembling these." So far as this particular application of the word is concerned, the induction appears to me just and comprehensive; and I readily subscribe to the opinion of Mr Price, when he assumes it "as perfectly clear, that Mr Burke's *general principles of beauty*—smoothness, "gradual variation, delicacy of make, tender colours, and such as insensibly melt into "each other, *are strictly applicable to female beauty;* so much so, that not one of "them can be changed or diminished without a manifest diminution of beauty."—(Essay on Beauty, prefixed to Mr Price's Dialogue, p. 22.)

In speculating on the idea of *the beautiful in general,* it seems evident, that we ought to begin with selecting our instances from objects intended to produce their effect on the *eye* alone; and afterwards, proceed to examine the various modifications of this idea, produced by associations arising from the perceptions of the other senses;—by associations of a moral nature;—by considerations of utility, &c. &c. &c. By following the opposite plan, and fixing (unconsciously perhaps) on female beauty as his standard, Burke has fallen into the very mistake, against which he has so judiciously cautioned his readers; that of circumscribing nature within the "bounds of a partial definition or description."—(See the Essay on Taste, prefixed to the Inquiry into the Sublime and Beautiful.)

ference to the sense of smelling and sight; and the effect is, on the whole, delightful *.

In natural objects, too, which are of so great a magnitude that we never think of subjecting them to the examination of touch, as well as in artificial objects, which are intended to be placed at an altitude beyond our reach, roughness, and even ruggedness, may often be considered as ingredients of beauty; as in rock-scenery, fretted ceilings, and various other cases. The fantastic forms of frost-work, and the broken surface of shell-work in artificial grottos, are obvious illustrations of the same remark.

* Mr Price has not only acknowledged the beauty of the moss-rose, but has connected with this fact some others, all of them equally inconsistent, in my opinion, with the peculiar notions which he has adopted from Mr Burke. "Flowers "are the most delicate and beautiful of inanimate objects; but their queen, "the rose, grows on a rough bush, whose leaves are serrated, and which is full of "thorns. The moss-rose has the addition of a rough hairy fringe, that almost makes "a part of the flower itself."——"Among the foreign oaks, maples, &c. those "are particularly esteemed, whose leaves *(according to a common though perhaps "contradictory phrase)* are BEAUTIFULLY JAGGED."——

"The vine leaf has, in all respects, a strong resemblance to the leaf of the plane, "and that extreme richness of effect, which everybody must be struck with in them "both, is greatly owing to those sharp angles, those sudden variations, so contrary "to the idea of beauty, when considered by itself."——"The effect of these jagged "points and angles is more strongly marked in sculpture, especially of vases of me-"tal, where the vine leaf, if imprudently handled, would at least prove, that sharp-"ness is very contrary to the beautiful in feeling."—(Price on the Picturesque, p. 94, et seq.)

In some of these last instances, the beauty of roughness arises, in part, from the very same cause which, in other cases, gives beauty to smoothness; the aptitude of the object to reflect, in an agreeable manner, the rays of light. Hence, too, the beauty of the brilliant cut in diamonds, and of the numberless angular forms (so contrary to Mr Burke's theory) in ornaments of cut crystal.

The agreeable effect of the smooth shaven green in gardens, seems also to arise from circumstances foreign to the sense of sight; particularly from the ideas of comfort connected with the use which is to be made of them; and the intimations they convey of the industry, attention, and art, employed in forming them, and in keeping them in order. The same smoothness and trim regularity would make a very different impression, if we should meet with them, *out of their proper place*;—on the surface, for example, of a sheep-walk, or of a deer-park; or (where we have sometimes the misfortune to see them) in the immediate neighbourhood of a venerable ruin.

In the section immediately following that to which I have now referred, Mr Burke observes further, "That, as perfectly "beautiful bodies are not composed of angular parts, so their "parts never continue long in the same right line. They vary "their direction every moment, and they change under the

" eye, by a deviation continually carrying on, but for whose " beginning or end you will find it difficult to ascertain a " point." He afterwards adds: "I do not find any natural " object which is angular, and at the same time beautiful. " Indeed few natural objects are entirely angular. But I " think, those which approach the most nearly to it are the " ugliest."

To the disagreeable effect which is here ascribed to angles, the same remark may be extended which was formerly made upon roughness; that it is confined chiefly to things destined to be handled, and which we know from experience would offend or injure the sense of touch. It is felt, too, in some cases, in which objects are considered in relation to certain uses or purposes for which they are intended; as in the sharp and inconvenient turnings of a road. But, abstracting from these and other analogous exceptions, it does not occur to me, that angles and other sudden variations are offensive to the eye. I have already mentioned the angular forms of cut crystal, and of gems which have passed through the hands of the lapidary; and also the more irregular and broken shapes of rock scenery. The same thing is still more strongly illustrated in such spectacles as belong to the sense of sight exclusively; as in fire-works; in the painting and gilding of the clouds; and, above all, in the zig-zag course of the ragged lightning.

A sharp angle is offensive in a river, partly because the gentle progress of the stream is too abruptly and rudely forced into a new direction; but chiefly, because the usual and natural course of rivers exhibits a different appearance, in consequence of the gradual influence of the current in wearing whatever is angular into an easy and sweeping curvature. For the same reason, habit, co-operating with (what is always agreeable) a clear perception of the physical cause by which a geological effect is produced, bestows a beauty on the regular correspondence of the saliant and re-entering angles of the opposite banks. It is, however, curious, and a strong confirmation of the truth of these remarks, that we judge of the beauty of a lake on principles perfectly different; and that nothing in nature can be conceived more pleasing, than when its shores are deeply indented by bays and creeks; or when sharp promontories advance boldly towards each other from opposite sides of the water. On this circumstance (as the Abbé de Lille has well remarked) is founded the characteristical difference between the beauties of a lake and those of a river.

" Autant que la rivière en sa molle souplesse
" D'un rivage anguleux redoute la rudesse,
" Autant les bords aigus, les longs enfoncemens
" Sont d'un lac étendu les plus beaux ornémens.
" Que la terre tantôt s'avance au sein des ondes,
" Tantôt qu'elle ouvre aux flots des retraites profondes;

" Et qu'ainsi s'appellant d'un mutuel amour,
" Et la terre et les eaux se cherchent tour-a-tour.
" Ces aspects variés amusent votre vue*."——

The doctrine which I have been now controverting, with respect to the effects of smoothness and of asperity, is entitled to more than common attention, as it forms the ground-work of a very ingenious and elegant Essay on the *Picturesque*, which, for several years past, has deservedly attracted a great deal of public attention. Indeed it was chiefly with a view to this work (the author of which seems to me to have been misled in his phraseology, and in some of his theoretical opinions, by too implicit an acquiescence in Mr Burke's conclusions), that I was led to select the subject of the foregoing discussion, in preference to various other points connected with the same system, which I consider as no less open to fair criticism.

According to Mr Price, the circumstances which please, both in natural scenes and in the compositions of the painter, are of two kinds; the Beautiful and the Picturesque. These, he thinks, are radically and essentially distinct; though both

* Les Jardins.—The same observation had been previously made by Mr Wheatley, in his " Observations on Modern Gardening," 4th edit, p. 66.—" In a lake, just " the reverse of a river, creeks, bays, recesses of every kind, are always in charac- " ter, sometimes necessary, and generally beautiful: the objections to them in the " one, are recommendations of them in the other."

must unite together in order to produce an effect completely agreeable. Smoothness, waving lines, and the other circumstances mentioned by Burke, are characteristical of the Beautiful; asperity, sharp angles, &c. of the Picturesque.

To this conclusion Mr Price was naturally, or rather necessarily led, by his admission, at his first outset, of Mr Burke's peculiar tenets as so many incontrovertible axioms. In the progress of his subsequent researches, finding numberless ingredients in agreeable compositions, that could not be brought under Burke's enumeration of the qualities which "go to the composition of the beautiful," he was forced to arrange them under some new name; whereas, he ought rather to have concluded, that the enumeration was partial and defective, and extended the application of the word Beauty, to whatever qualities in natural objects affect the mind with agreeable emotions, through the *medium* of sight. Instead, for example, of objecting to that style of landscape-gardening, which has been carried to such an excess by some of the followers of Brown, on the ground of its not being *picturesque*, would it not have been more agreeable to common language, to have objected to it on the ground of its not being *beautiful*? For my own part, I am inclined to admit asperity, sharp angles, and irregularity (when introduced in their proper places) among the constituents of Beauty, as well as their opposites; and I would study the art of combining

them happily, not in the arbitrary definitions of theorists, but in the great volume of Nature herself. The conjectures of various modern writers concerning the principles upon which different forms produce their effects, and the conclusions of some of them (particularly of Hogarth) with respect to the waving line, do great honour to their ingenuity, and may probably admit in some of the arts, of very useful practical applications: but philosophical distinctness, as well as universal practice, requires, that the meaning of the word Beauty, instead of being restricted in conformity to any partial system whatever, should continue to be the generic word for expressing every quality which, in the works either of nature or of art, contributes to render them agreeable to the eye. I would not therefore restrict, even to Hogarth's line, the appellation of *the line of beauty*, if that phrase be understood to imply any thing more, than that this line seems, from an examination of many of Nature's most pleasing productions, to be one of her favourite forms.

Before dismissing the theories of Hogarth and Burke, I think it proper again to remind my readers, that I do not dispute their practical value in some of the fine arts. I only object to such systems when they profess to embrace all the principles on which the complicated charms of Nature depend; or when, without any reference to a particular design, they are converted into universal maxims,

arising out of the very definition of beauty; and to which, of consequence, artists may conceive it to be incumbent on them to adhere, in order to insure success. In works which are merely ornamental, they are much more likely to hold, than when some farther end is proposed; for, in cases of the latter sort, the pleasing or disagreeable effects connected with material forms, considered abstractly, are so easily overpowered by the more weighty considerations suggested by views of fitness and utility, that the maxims adapted to one art will seldom be found of much use when applied to another: the maxims, for example, of architecture, when applied to landscape-gardening; or those of landscape-gardening, when applied to architecture.

The beauty of a winding approach to a house, when the easy deviations from the straight line are all accounted for by the shape of the ground, or by the position of trees, is universally acknowledged; but what more ridiculous than a road meandering through a plain, perfectly level and open? In this last case, I am inclined to refer the disagreeable effect to the principle of *the sufficient reason* already mentioned. The slightest apology for *a sweep* satisfies the taste at once. It is enough that the designer has the appearance of humouring nature, and not of indulging his own caprice. The pleasing effect of the irregular tracks worn out upon the surface of *broken ground*, by the frequent footsteps of shepherds, or even

of their flocks, will be found, on examination, to turn on the very same principle.

How much our feelings, in such cases, are influenced by considerations of *fitness* or *utility*, appears from the different judgments we pronounce on the beauty of the same line, according to the purpose for which we conceive it to be destined. In judging of an approach to a house, we have always a secret reference to the form and mechanism of our common wheel-carriages.

It does not follow from these remarks, that there is no beauty in the serpentine line; but only that, in things destined for any useful purpose, its pleasing effect may be destroyed by the most trivial circumstances.

I recollect the period when serpentine ridges, in ploughed land, were pretty generally considered in Scotland as beautiful; and if they were equally consistent with good husbandry, I have no doubt that they would be more pleasing to the eye than straight ones. The association, however, which is now universally established between the former, and the ideas of carelessness, sloth, and poverty;—between the latter, and the ideas of industry, skill, and prosperity, has completely altered our notions concerning both. Mr Burke, indeed, rejects *utility* from his enumeration of the

constituents of beauty; but I am persuaded, that I speak in perfect conformity to the common feelings and common language of mankind, when I say, that nothing is more beautiful than a *highly dressed field*. Such, too, I am happy to add, was the opinion of Cicero. "Agro bene culto, nil po-"test esse, nec usu uberius, nec *specie ornatius*."

# CHAPTER FIFTH.

## CONTINUATION OF THE SAME SUBJECT.

To the latitude in the use of the word Beauty, of which I have been thus attempting to vindicate the propriety, it has been objected, both by Mr Burke and Mr Price, that it has a tendency to produce a confusion of ideas, and to give rise to ill-judged applications of the term. The inconveniencies, however, of which they complain, appear to me to have arisen entirely from their own inattention to a very important distinction among the various elements, or ingredients, which may enter into the composition of the Beautiful. Of these elements, there are some which are themselves intrinsically pleasing, without a reference to any thing else; there are others which please only in a state of combination. Thus there are certain colours which every person would pronounce to be pleas-

ing, when presented singly to the eye; there are others, which, without possessing any such recommendation, produce a pleasing effect when happily *assorted*. The beauty of the former may be said to be absolute or intrinsic; that of the latter to be only relative.

Numberless other instances might be mentioned of things that have only a relative beauty. This, indeed, is the case with most things which nature has destined to be only parts of some whole; and which, accordingly, are beautiful only *in their proper places*. A few years ago, it was not unusual to see a picture of a lady's *eye* in the possession of her friend or admirer; and there is a possibility that the effect might not be disagreeable to those whose memory was able to supply readily the rest of the features. To a stranger (if I may judge from my own feelings) it was scarcely less offensive than if it had been painted in the middle of her forehead.

In reasoning about the Beautiful, Mr Burke confines his attention, almost exclusively, to those elements of Beauty which are intrinsically pleasing, assuming it probably in his own mind, as self-evident, that Beauty, when exhibited in the works of nature, and in the compositions of art, is produced by a combination of these alone. If, instead of following this synthetical process, he had begun with considering the beautiful in its more complicated forms, (the point of view

unquestionably in which it is most interesting to a philosopher to examine it, when his aim is to illustrate its relation to the power of taste,) he could not have failed to have been led analytically to this distinction between the *intrinsic* and the *relative* beauties of its constituent elements, and to perceive that the one class is as essential as the other to the general result.

The same remark may be extended to that external sense from which the power of taste borrows its name; and to which, in a variety of respects, it will be found to bear a very close analogy. Among simple tastes, such as sweet, sour, bitter, hot, pungent, there are some which are intrinsically grateful; while others, which are not less necessary ingredients in some of our most delicious mixtures, are positively disagreeable in a separate state. At the head of the former class, *sweet* seems to be placed by universal consent; and accordingly it is called by Mr Burke the *beautiful of taste*. In speaking, however, of those more refined and varied gratifications of the palate to which the arts of luxury minister, it is not to any one *simple taste*, but to *mixtures*, or *compositions* resulting from a skilful combination of them, that the epithet *beautiful* (supposing this new phraseology to be adopted) ought, according to strict analogy, to be applied. Agreeably to this view of the subject, *sweet* may be said to be *intrinsically* pleasing, and *bitter* to be *relatively* pleasing;

while both are, in many cases, equally essential to those effects, which, in the art of *cookery*, correspond to that *composite beauty*, which it is the object of the painter and of the poet to create.

A great deal of what Mr Price has so ingeniously observed with respect to the *picturesque*, is applicable to what I have here called *relative beauties*; and so far as this is the case, instead of making the Picturesque a distinct *genus* from the Beautiful, it would certainly have been more logical to say, that the former is, in some cases, an important element in the composition of the latter. For my own part, I cannot conceive any principle whatever, on which we can reasonably refuse a place among the *elements* or *constituents* of *beauty*, to a class of qualities which are acknowledged, on all hands, to render what was formerly beautiful, more beautiful *still*.

But it is not on this ground alone that I object to Mr Price's language. The meaning he has annexed to the word *picturesque* seems to me to be equally exceptionable with the limited and arbitrary notion concerning the *beautiful*, which he has adopted from Mr Burke. In both cases, he has departed widely from established use; and, in consequence of this, when he comes to compare, according to his peculiar definitions, the *picturesque* and the *beautiful* together, he has given to many observations, equally just and refined, an air

of paradox, which might have been easily avoided, by employing a more cautious phraseology. In justification of this criticism, it is necessary to introduce here a few remarks on the different acceptations in which the epithet *picturesque* has been hitherto understood in this country, since it was naturalized by the authority of our classical writers*.

And first, as to the oldest and most general use of the word; it seems to me an unquestionable proposition, That if *this* is to be appealed to as the standard of propriety, the word does not refer *immediately* to landscapes, or to any visible objects, but to verbal description. It means that *graphical* power by which poetry and eloquence produce effects on the mind analogous to those of a picture. Thus, every person would naturally apply the epithet to the following description of a thunder-storm in Thomson's Seasons:

"Black from the stroke above, the mountain-pine,
"A leaning shatter'd trunk, stands scath'd to heaven,
"The talk of future ages; and below,
"A lifeless group the blasted cattle lie:
"Here the soft flocks, with that same harmless look
"They wore alive, and ruminating still
"In fancy's eye; and there the frowning bull
"And ox half raised."——

* See Note (T).

To prevent, however, any misapprehensions of my meaning, it is proper to add, that, in speaking of the *graphical* power of poetry and eloquence, I would not be understood to limit that epithet (according to its etymology) to objects of Sight; but to extend it to all those details, of whatever kind, by a happy selection of which the imagination may be forcibly impressed. In the following sentence, Dr Warton applies the word *picturesque* (and I think with the most exact propriety) to a passage of Thomson, where it is somewhat curious, that every circumstance mentioned recals some impression upon the Ear alone.

"How full," (says Warton) "how particular and *pic-* "*turesque*, is this assemblage of circumstances, that attend a "very keen frost in a night of winter!"

"Loud rings the frozen earth, and hard reflects
"A double noise; while at his evening watch,
"The village dog deters the nightly thief:
"The heifer lows; the distant waterfall
"Swells in the breeze; and with the hasty tread
"Of traveller, the hollow-sounding plain
"Shakes from afar."—

This use of the word *picturesque* is analogous to the common signification of other words which have a similar termination, and are borrowed from the Italian, through the me-

dium of the French. The word *arabesque*, for example, expresses something which is executed in the style of the Arabians; *moresque*, something in the style of the Moors: and *grotesque*, something bearing a resemblance to certain whimsical paintings found in a grotto, or subterraneous apartment at Rome. In like manner, *picturesque* properly means what is done in the style, and with the spirit of a painter; and it was thus, if I am not much mistaken, that the word was commonly employed, when it was first adopted in England. Agreeably to the same idea, the Persians, it is said, distinguish the different degrees of descriptive power in different writers, by calling them *painters* or *sculptors*: in allusion to which practice, the title of a *sculptor-poet* has been bestowed by a very ingenious critic on Lucretius, in consequence of the singularly bold relief which he gives to his images *.

Of late years, since a taste for landscape-painting came to be fashionable in this island, the word *picturesque* has been frequently employed to denote those combinations or groups or attitudes of objects, that are fitted for the purposes of the painter. It is in this sense that the word is used by Mr Gilpin in his Observations on Picturesque Beauty; and I am inclined to think, that it is in this sense it is now most com-

* Dr Warton, Essay on the Genius of Pope, Vol. II. p. 165.

monly understood, in speaking of natural scenery, or of the works of the architect.

I do not object to this employment of the word, (although I certainly think it an innovation) for it conveys a clear and definite idea, and one for which there was no appropriate expression in our language. Nor do I see any impropriety in connecting the words Picturesque and Beauty *together*; for although an object may be beautiful without being picturesque, or picturesque without being beautiful, yet there is not any inconsistency or incompatibility in the ideas. On the contrary, it is only when the two qualities are united, that landscape-painting produces its highest effect

According to Mr Price, the phrase Picturesque Beauty is little better than a contradiction in terms; but *although this* may be the case in the arbitrary interpretation which he has given to both these words, there is certainly no contradiction in the expression, *if* we employ Beauty in its ordinary sense, and Picturesque in the sense very distinctly stated in Mr Gilpin's definition †.

* See Note (U).

† Mr Price himself appears to be sensible of this, from the parenthesis in the following sentence: "There is nothing more ill-judged, or more likely to create confusion, (if we agree with Mr Burke in his idea of beauty,) than the joining of it to "the picturesque, and calling the character by the title of Picturesque Beauty."—(P. 42.)

The same remark may be extended to the Sublime; between which and the Beautiful, there certainly does not exist that incongruity which most English writers have of late been pleased to suppose*. *The sublime beauties of nature; the*

* The prevalence of this idea (which does not seem to have gained much ground on the continent) is to be ascribed chiefly to the weight of Mr Burke's authority. To many of the passages which both he and Dr Blair have quoted from poets and orators, as examples of the *Sublime*, a Frenchman would undoubtedly consider the epithet *Beau* as at least equally applicable.

Mr Burke's theory concerning the connection between Beauty and Smallness, could not fail to confirm him in his opinion of the incompatibility of the Beautiful with the Sublime. In this theory also, he has founded a general conclusion on certain local or temporary modes of judging, instead of consulting that more important class of facts confirmed by the *consent* of different ages and nations.

With respect to the taste of the ancient Greeks upon this subject, according to which, Magnitude and Strength were considered as ingredients in the Beauty even of the female form, See the very learned and ingenious notes, subjoined by Mr Twining to his excellent translation of Aristotle's Treatise on Poetry, pp. 263, 264, 265.

From the contrast perpetually stated between the meanings of the words *Beau* and *Joli*, Mr Price concludes, that "the French, like the more ancient Greeks, appear* to have considered large stature as almost a requisite of beauty, and not only "in men, but in women." In this inference I am inclined to agree with him; although I must, at the same time, confess, that I know of no French writer, (not excepting the Abbé Girard) who has enabled me to draw a line between these two epithets, completely satisfactory to myself. I recollect at present two instances, in which I should be glad to see their respective imports happily translated into our language. In the first, both epithets are applied to the same person, and at the same period of her life; and, consequently, the one is not absolutely exclusive of the other.

* Pp. 16 and 21, of the Essay on Beauty, prefixed to Mr Price's Dialogue.

*sublime beauties of the sacred writings*;—as it is one of the most common, so it is also one of the most intelligible forms of expression employed by critics. The Sublime and the Picturesque, therefore, it would appear, are most properly used as qualifying epithets, to limit the meaning of the generic name Beauty in particular instances. A great variety of other epithets besides these are found to be necessary, for the expression of our feelings on different occasions. It is thus that we speak of the simple beauties of the Doric order; and of the rich or ornamented beauties of the Corinthian. It is thus that we contrast with the wild and savage beauties of Nature, the regular, the refined, the chaste, the finished, the classical beauties of Art. It is thus, too, that we contrast, in the well-known picture of Garrick, the beauties of the tragic with those of the comic muse; or, in the poetry of Milton, the gay and lively beauties of his *Allegro* with the serious and melancholy beauties of his *Penseroso*. In a word, to oppose the Beautiful to the Sublime, or to the Picturesque, strikes me as something analogous to a contrast between the Beautiful and the Comic; the Beautiful and the Tragic; the

In neither instance, can the contrast turn, in the slightest degree, on any circumstance connected with stature.

"Seliane, dans sa jeunesse, avoit été jolie et belle: elle étoit belle encore; mais "elle commençoit à n'etre plus jolie."—Marmontel, *(Les Quatre Flacons.)*

"Une femme ne peut guères être belle que d'une façon, mais elle est jolie de cent "mille."—Montesquieu, *(Essai Sur le Gout.)*

Beautiful and the Pathetic; or the Beautiful and the Romantic.

I have said, that it is only when the Beautiful and the Picturesque are united, that landscape-painting produces its highest effect. The truth of this proposition seems to be unquestionable, unless we suppose, that no part of the effect of a picture arises from its conveying the idea of a beautiful original.

It is true that, in the *details* of a landscape, there are often many circumstances possessing no intrinsic beauty, which have a far happier effect than the highest beauties which could be substituted in their place. On examination, however, it will be found, that the effect of these circumstances does not depend on their intrinsic qualities, but on their accidental *significance* or *expression*, as hints to the imagination; and therefore, if we apply to such circumstances the epithet picturesque*, (which is a use of the word not very remote

* Neither Mr Price nor Mr Gilpin appear to me to have been sufficiently aware of the difference between the meaning which they annex to the word *Picturesque*, when applied to those details in a landscape, which are peculiarly characteristic and expressive, and its meaning when applied to the general design and composition of the piece. In the former sense, it conveys an idea quite distinct from the Beautiful, and (as will afterwards appear) sometimes at variance with it. In the other sense, there can be no doubt that the beauty of the scene represented will add proportionally to the pleasing effect of the picture.

from its meaning, when applied to verbal description) that the pleasure which the picturesque in this case conveys, is ultimately resolvable into that which is connected by means of association with the perception of the beautiful. Its effect depends on its power of conveying to the fancy more than the pencil of the artist has delineated, and consequently is to be referred ultimately to the beauties which are *supplied* or *understood;* for the same reason that the pleasing effect of the profile, or *silhouette,* of a beautiful woman is ultimately to be referred, not to what is seen, but to what is recalled to the memory; or (to take an instance still more general in its application) for the same reason that the pathetic effect of the veil thrown over the face of Agamemnon, in the *Iphigenia* of Timanthes, was owing, *not* to the veil, but to the features which it was imagined to conceal. "Velavit ejus caput (says Quinctilian) et *suo cuique* "animo dedit æstimandum." Of the same painter it is observed by Pliny: "In omnibus ejus operibus intelligitur "plus semper quam pingitur."

Among the various applications of the word Picturesque to painting, this last use of it is more closely analogous to its primary application to verbal description, than any of the others. In *this* sense, (which, for the sake of distinctness, I shall call its *poetical* sense) it does not denote what is actually represented; but what sets the imagination at

work, in forming pictures of its own; or, in other words, those parts of a picture, where more is meant and suggested than meets the eye. Of this sort is a group of cattle standing in a river, or collected under the shade of a tree, when introduced into a landscape, to recal the impressions and scenery of a summer noon;—a ruined castle or abbey employed to awaken the memory of former times, accompanied with those feudal or monastic visions so dear to a romantic fancy; with numberless other instances of a similar sort, which must immediately occur to all my readers.

For some reasons, which will afterwards appear, the word Picturesque, in this *poetical* sense, is applicable to many of the objects which are also picturesque, according to Mr Gilpin's definition; and which, at the same time, unite the most remarkable of those properties which Mr Price has pointed out, as distinguishing the Picturesque from the Beautiful. Hence these ingenious writers have been led, on several occasions, to ascribe much more effect to the mere visible appearance of such objects, than really belongs to it. An example of this occurs in the stress which they have very justly laid on the form of the Ass, as peculiarly adapted to the artist's pencil; a form which they have both pronounced to be picturesque in an eminent degree.

But the Ass, it must be remembered, has, beside his appear-

ance, strong claims, on other accounts, to the painter's attention. Few animals have so powerful an effect in awakening associated ideas and feelings; and accordingly, it is eminently Picturesque, in the poetical sense of that word, as well as in the acceptation in which it is understood by Mr Price. Not to speak of the frequent allusions to it in Holy Writ, what interest are we led to attach to it in our early years, by the Fables of Æsop; by the similies of Homer; by the exploits of Don Quixote; by the pictures which it recals to us of the bye-paths in the forest, where we have so often met with it as the beast of burden, and the associate of the vagrant poor, or where we have stopped to gaze on the infant beauties which it carried in its panniers;—in fine, by the circumstances which have called forth, in its eulogy, one of the most pleasing efforts of Buffon's eloquence; its own quiet and inoffensive manners, and the patience with which it submits to its life of drudgery. It is worthy, too, of remark, that this animal, when we meet with it in painting, is seldom the common ass of our own country, but the ass ennobled by the painter's taste; or copied from the animal of the same species, which we have seen in the patriarchal journeys, and other scripture-pieces of eminent masters. In consequence of this circumstance, a pleasing association, arising from the many beautiful compositions of which it forms a part, comes to be added to its other recommendations already mentioned, and has secured to it a rank on the can-

vas, which the degradation of its name will for ever prevent it from attaining in the works of our English poets.

These observations may be extended, in some degree also, to the Goat; strongly associated as its figure is with the romantic scenes of an Alpine region; and with the precipitous cliffs, where it has occasionally caught our eye, browsing on the pendent shrubs in security and solitude.

With respect to the peculiarities in point of form, colouring, roughness of coat, &c. to which, according to Mr Gilpin and Mr Price, both these animals owe their Picturesque character, they seem to me to operate chiefly by the *stimulus* they give to the powers of imagination and of memory. Where this is the end which the artist has in view, such forms and colours possess important and obvious advantages over those which are much more decidedly beautiful; inasmuch as these last, by the immediate pleasure which they communicate to the organ, have a tendency to arrest the progress of our thoughts, and to engage the whole of our attention to themselves.

It is scarcely necessary for me to add, that a great part of what has just been observed, is applicable to the art of embellishing real scenery, as well as to the compositions of the painter. Many of Mr Price's suggestions for giving a Pictu-

resque character to grounds and to buildings, turn upon circumstances which owe their whole effect to their *poetical expression*.

When these different considerations are combined together, there will not, I apprehend, appear to be any sound foundation for distinguishing the Picturesque from the Beautiful as a quality essentially different; the pleasure we receive from the former, resolving either into that arising from the conception or imagination of *understood* beauties, or into the accessary pleasures excited in the mind, by means of the associating principle.

On other occasions, the distinction stated by Mr Price between the Picturesque and the Beautiful coincides with the distinction between natural and artificial beauty; and the rules he gives for producing the Picturesque resolve into the old precept of employing art to conceal her own operations. In these, as indeed in all other cases, his rules (as far as I am able to judge) are the result of exquisite taste, and evince habits of the nicest and most discriminating observation; and it is only to be regretted that he had not been more fortunate in the choice, and more consistent in the use of his phraseology *.

* In some of the passages which I allude to at present, the word *picturesque* seems

Notwithstanding, however, these occasional variations in his interpretation of the word Picturesque, the prevailing idea which he annexes to it, throughout his work, coincides very nearly with the definition of Mr Gilpin. In proof of this, it is sufficient to mention, that, in his title page, what he professes to treat of, is, *the advantages to be derived from the study of paintings in improving real landscape;* a circumstance which shews plainly, that it was this notion of the Picturesque which was predominant in his mind while he was employed in the composition. The truth of the doctrine which he thus announces as his principal subject, I am by no means disposed to dispute; but some limitations of it occur to me as so indispensably necessary, that I shall slightly touch upon one or two of the most important, before I conclude this chapter.

That the Picturesque (according to Mr Gilpin's definition of it) does not always coincide with what the eye pronounces to be Beautiful in the reality, has been often observed; and is, indeed, an obvious consequence of the limited powers of painting, and of the limited range of objects which the artist

to be synonymous with *romantic*, as formerly applied by our English writers to wild scenery.—Milton uses *grotesque* nearly in the same sense:

——————"The champaign head
"Of a steep wilderness, whose hairy sides
"With thicket overgrown, grotesque and wild,
Access deny'd."——

can present to the eye at once. No pencil can convey to us a pleasure bearing any resemblance to that which we receive, when we enjoy, from a commanding eminence, an extensive prospect of a rich champaign country, or a boundless view of the ocean; nor can it copy, with any success, many other of the most engaging aspects of nature. The painter, accordingly, when he attempts a portrait of real landscape, is obliged to seize such points of view as are adapted to the circumscribed resources of his art; and, in his observation of Nature, is unavoidably led to the study of what Mr Gilpin calls *picturesque effect*. By these habits of study, he cannot fail to acquire a new interest in the beautiful objects he meets with; a critical discrimination in his perceptions, unknown to common spectators; and a sensibility to many pleasing details, which to them are invisible. "Quàm "multa vident pictores" (says Cicero, in the words of Mr Price's motto) "in umbris et in eminentia quæ nos non "videmus!" Nor is this all. To the pleasure arising from what is presented to his senses, is superadded that which he anticipates from the exercise of his own art; or those which are revived in his memory, by the resemblance of what he sees to the compositions of his favourite masters. The most trifling *accident of scenery*, it is evident, (at least the most trifling to an unskilled eye) may thus possess, in his estimation, a value superior to that which he ascribes to beauties of a far higher order; his imagination, in some

cases, filling up the picture where nature has but faintly sketched the outline; in other cases, the reality borrowing a charm from some associated painting,—as, in the judgment of the multitude, paintings borrow their principal charm from associated realities.

While the studies of the painter contribute, in this manner, to create a relish for the *beautiful picturesque*, is there no danger that they may produce, in a limited mind, habits of inattention or of indifference to those *natural beauties* which defy the imitation of the pencil; and that his taste may become, in time, circumscribed like the canvas upon which he works? I think I have perceived, in some artists and connoisseurs, examples of this, within the narrow circle of my own observation. In such cases, we might almost be tempted to reverse the question in Mr Price's motto;—quàm multa videmus nos quæ pictores non vident!

As to the application of the knowledge thus acquired from the study of paintings, to the improvement of natural landscape, I have no doubt that, to a superior understanding and taste, like those of Mr Price, it may often suggest very useful *hints*; but if recognized as the standard to which the ultimate appeal is to be made, it would infallibly cover the face of the country with a new and systematical species of affectation, not less remote than that of Brown, from the style of gardening which he wishes to recommend.

To this it may be added, that, as an object which is offensive in the reality may please in painting; so many things which would offend in painting, may yet please in the reality. If, in some respects, therefore, the study of painting is a useful auxiliary in the art of creating landscape; in others, there is, at least, a possibility that it may lead the judgment astray, or impose unnecessary fetters on an inventive imagination.

I have only to remark farther, that, in laying out grounds, still more, perhaps, than in any other of the fine arts, the primary object of a good taste is, not to please the connoisseur, but to please the enlightened admirer and lover of nature. The perfection of all these arts is undoubtedly to give pleasure to both; as they always will, and must do, when the taste of the connoisseur is guided by good sense and philosophy. Pliny justly considered it as the highest praise he could bestow on the exquisite beauties of a Corinthian antique, when he sums up his description of them, by observing,—"Talia denique omnia, ut possint artificum oculos tenere, "delectare imperitorum." Objects, of whatever kind, which please the connoisseur alone, prove only that there is something fundamentally wrong in the principles upon which he judges; and most of all do they authorize this conclusion, when Nature herself is the subject upon which the artist is to operate, and where the chief glory of Art is to work unseen.

Upon the whole, let painting be allowed its due praise in quickening our attention to the beauties of nature; in multiplying our resources for their further embellishment; and in holding up a standard, from age to age, to correct the caprices of fashionable innovations; but let our taste for these beauties be *chiefly* formed on the study of Nature herself;—nor let us ever forget so far what is due to *her* indisputable and salutary prerogative, as to attempt an encroachment upon it by laws, which derive the whole of their validity from her own sanction *.

* "I shall add no more to what I have here offered, than that music, architecture, and painting, as well as poetry and oratory, are to deduce their laws and rules "from the general sense and taste of mankind, and not from the principles of these "arts themselves; or, in other words, the taste is not to conform to the art, but "the art to the taste."—Spectator, No. 29.

## CHAPTER SIXTH.

OF THE APPLICATION OF THE THEORY OF ASSOCIATION TO BEAUTY.—FARTHER GENERALIZATIONS OF THIS WORD, IN CONSEQUENCE OF THE INFLUENCE OF THE ASSOCIATING PRINCIPLE.

In the foregoing remarks on Beauty, although I have occasionally alluded to the Association of Ideas, I have avoided all discussion with respect to the extent of its influence. It is necessary for me, however, now to consider, at some length, the effects of a principle which, in the opinion of many philosophers, furnishes a complete explanation of all the phenomena which have been under our consideration; and which must be acknowledged, even by those who do not go so far, to be deeply concerned in the production of most of them.

I had occasion to observe, in a former publication, that

the theory which resolves the *whole* effect of beautiful objects into Association, must necessarily involve that species of paralogism, to which logicians give the name of *reasoning in a circle.* It is the province of association to impart to one thing the agreeable or the disagreeable effect of another; but association can never account for the *origin* of a class of pleasures different in kind from all the others we know. If there was nothing originally and intrinsically pleasing or beautiful, the associating principle would have no materials on which it could operate.

Among the writers who have attempted to illustrate the great influence of Association on our judgments concerning the Beautiful, I do not know of any who seem to have been completely aware of the force of this objection but Mr Alison; and accordingly the fundamental idea which runs through his book, and which, in my opinion, is equally refined and just, is entirely his own. He does not deny, that, independently of custom and habit, there are numberless sources of enjoyment in the human frame, arising from its adaptation to the various objects around it. He only asserts, that a large proportion of the qualities which produce these pleasures, although they cannot be called Beautiful, while they affect the bodily organs immediately, may yet enter largely, by means of the Association of Ideas, into the beauty of the visible creation. Thus,

the qualities which excite the agreeable sensations exclusively appropriated to the nostrils, cannot be said to be beautiful, without departing altogether from the common use of language; but who will deny, that the pleasing effect produced by the form and colour of a rose, even when viewed at a distance, is heightened by the sweet fragrance which we know that it possesses? The effect of the appearance here presented to the eye, and that of the associated pleasure, are so intimately and so necessarily blended together in the mind of every individual, that it is impossible for any person to say, how much of the complicated delight is to be ascribed to each of the two ingredients; and therefore, the pleasing *conception* which is linked with the *appearance* of the object, no less than the *appearance* itself, may be justly regarded as a constituent of its Beauty: it is unquestionably the union of both which has secured to the Rose her indisputed title, as Queen of Flowers. The principle of Association is not, in this instance, employed to account for the pleasing effect which the smell of the rose produces on its appropriate sense; but to explain in what manner the recollection of this agreeable *sensation* may enter, as an element, into the composition of an order of pleasures distinguished by a different name, and classed with the pleasures of a different organ. In so far, therefore, as the sensations of smelling minister to the Beauty of nature, it may, with great correctness, be said, that they do so *only* through the *medium* of that principle,

which combines the *conception* of them in the mind of the spectator with the *perception* of the colours and the forms exhibited to his eye.

What has now been remarked with respect to *smell*, is applicable to every other pleasing impression or emotion which Association can attach to a visible object. In consequence of the close relation which subsists between the senses of seeing and of *touch*, it applies with peculiar force to those things about which the latter sense is likely to be employed; and hence, in many instances, the influence (formerly explained) of ideas connected with the perceptions of the hand, in modifying the judgments concerning Beauty, which the eye pronounces *.

* ——— "Chaque sens, par un heureux concours,
"Prête aux sens alliés un mutuel secours;
"Le frais gazon des eaux m'embellit leur murmure,
"Leur murmure, à son tour, m'embellit la verdure.
"L'odorat sert le gout, et l'oeil sert l'odorat;
"L'haleine de la rose ajoute à son eclat;
"Et d'un ambre flatteur la pêche parfumée,
"Parait plus savoureuse à la bouche embaumée;
"Voyez l'amour heureux par un double larcin!
"La main invite l'oeil, l'oeil appelle la main,
"Et d'une bouche fraiche ou le baiser repose
"Le parfum est plus doux sur des levres de rose.
"Ainsi tout se repond, et doublant leurs plaisirs,
"Tous les sens l'un de l'autre eveillent les desirs."

De Lille.—L'Imagination, Chant I.

It is, however, chiefly by intellectual and moral associations, that our notions of Beauty are influenced. How powerful the charm is which may be thus communicated to things of little intrinsic interest, may be judged of from the fond partiality with which we continue, through the whole of life, to contrast the banks and streams of our infancy and youth, with "*other banks and other streams* *." In this manner, by means of association, any one pleasing circumstance or occurrence in nature, how remote soever in itself from the idea of the Beautiful, may be yet so combined in our imagination with the Beautiful properly so called, that no philosophical analysis can separate them in their effect. On such occasions, the task of the philosopher is limited to the gratification of a speculative curiosity in collecting new illustrations of his theories; or (where he experiences the inconveniencies of his own early prepossessions) to a more judicious regulation of the habits of others, whose associations are yet to be formed.

But on this view of the subject, although I consider it as by far the most curious and important of any, I do not mean to enlarge. The strong and happy lights which have been thrown upon it by Mr Alison, render any farther illustration of it superfluous; and leave me nothing to add, in this part of my argument, but a few slight hints, tending to connect

* Shenstone, *Ode to Memory*.

some of his conclusions with that peculiar idea of Beauty which I have been attempting to develope.

It is scarcely necessary for me to observe, that, in those instances where Association operates in heightening the pleasures we receive from sight, the pleasing emotion continues still to appear, to our consciousness, simple and uncompounded. How little soever the qualities that are *visible* may in themselves contribute to the joint result, it is these qualities which solely, or at least chiefly, occupy our attention. The object seems really invested with the charms which we ourselves have lent to it; and so completely are these charms united, in our apprehensions, with those attached to the organic impression, that we never think of referring them to different causes; but conceive that the Beauty of the object increases in proportion to the rapture with which we gaze on it. Hence the surprise and disappointment we are apt to feel, when we strive in vain, by an exhibition of the supposed cause of our delight, to impart to a stranger an enthusiasm similar to our own: And hence, upon all questions in which the affections are concerned, a diversity in the tastes and predilections of individuals, which is not to be reconciled by any general principles drawn from the philosophy of the human mind.

Nor is there any thing in this process different from what the analogy of our other perceptions would lead us to expect.

If the constant co-existence of two such heterogeneous qualities as *colour* and *extension* in the objects of sight, renders them completely inseparable in our thoughts, why should we wonder, that the intellectual and more fugitive elements of Beauty, should be insensibly identified with whatever forms and colours may chance to embody them to the eye or to the fancy?

The most striking illustration of this that can be produced is, the complicated assemblage of charms, physical and moral, which enter into the composition of Female Beauty. What philosopher can presume to analyze the different ingredients; or to assign to *matter* and to *mind* their respective shares in exciting the emotion which he feels? I believe, for my own part, that the effect depends chiefly on the Mind; and that the loveliest features, if divested of their expression, would be beheld with indifference. But no person thus philosophizes when the object is before him, or dreams of any source of his pleasure, but that Beauty which fixes his gaze.

With what admirable precision and delicacy are its undefinable elements touched on in the following verses!

"Rien ne manque à Venus, ni les lys, ni les roses,
"Ni *le melange exquis* des plus aimables choses,
"Ni ce charme secret dont l'oeil est enchanté,
"Ni la grace plus belle encore que la beauté *."

* La Fontaine. *Adonis.*

In Homer's description of Juno, when attiring herself to deceive Jupiter, by trying "*the old, yet still successful cheat of* "*love*;" it is remarkable, that the poet leaves to her own fancy the whole task of adorning and heightening her personal attractions; but when she requests Venus to grant her

——"Those conqu'ring charms,
"That power which mortals and immortals warms,"——

The gifts which she receives are, all of them, significant of *mental* qualities alone:

——"The gentle vow, the gay desire,
"The kind deceit, the still reviving fire,
"Persuasive speech, and more persuasive sighs,
"Silence that spoke, and eloquence of eyes."

The exquisite allegory of the *Cestus*, expresses, in one single word, how innumerable and ineffable were the enchantments, visible and invisible, which the Goddess of Love mingled together, in binding her omnipotent spell *.

* I have adopted in the text, Pope's version, (though somewhat paraphrastical) in preference to the original; as it combines at once the authority of ancient and of modern taste, in confirmation of the point which it is brought to illustrate. The words of Homer are at least equally apposite to my purpose with those of his translator:

"Ενθ' ενι μεν φιλοτης, εν δ' ιμερος, εν δ' οαριστυς,
"Παρφασις, ητ' εκλεψε νοον πυκα περ φρονεοντων."

The intimate combination which, in this and various other cases, exists between the immediate objects of sight, and the moral ideas they suggest, led, in ancient times, Plato, as well as his master Socrates, and many later philosophers of the same school, to conclude, that the word Beauty, in its literal acceptation, denotes a quality, not of *matter* but of *mind;* and that, as the light we admire on the discs of the moon and planets is, when traced to its original source, the light of the sun, so what is commonly called the beauty of the material world, is but a reflection from those primitive and underived beauties, which the intellectual eye can alone perceive.

I have already said, that, in my opinion, the chief effect of Female Beauty depends on Expression.—A similar remark may be applied (though perhaps not altogether in the same extent) to the Material Universe in general; the Beauty of which, it cannot be denied, is wonderfully heightened to those who are able to read in it the expressive characters of

The *je ne sçais quoi* of the French, and the fortunate phrase in an English song, ("the provoking *charm of Cœlia altogether*,") have been suggested by the same feeling with respect to the problematical essence of female beauty. The very word *charm*, when its different meanings are attentively considered, will be found an additional confirmation of this remark.

"'Tis not a lip or eye, we Beauty call,
"But the joint force and full result of all."

a governing intelligence. But still I think that Beauty, in its literal sense, denotes what is presented to the organ of Sight; and that it is afterwards transferred to moral qualities by an associating process, similar to that which combines the smell of a rose with its beautiful form and colour; or which embellishes our native spot with the charms which it borrows from the pleasures of memory. The chief difference between the cases here mentioned, consists in the intimate and inseparable union, which, in the human face, connects soul and body with each other; a union to which nothing completely analogous occurs in any other association whatsoever.

——— "Her pure and eloquent blood
"Spoke in her cheek, and so distinctly wrought,
"That one might almost say *her body thought.*"

To the peculiar intimacy of this connection, (which, as long as the beautiful object is under our survey, blends the qualities of matter and those of mind in one common perception,) it seems to be owing, that the word Beauty comes, in process of time, to be applied to certain moral qualities considered abstractly *. The qualities which are thus charac-

* Such too seems to have been the opinion of Cicero, from the following passage, which coincides remarkably, in more respects than one, with the doctrine maintained in the text:

"Itaque eorum ipsorum, *quæ adspectu sentiuntur*, nullum aliud animal pulchritu-
"dinem, venustatem, convenientiam partium sentit; quam similitudinem natura ra-

terized in ordinary discourse, are, in truth, exactly those which it gives us the greatest delight to see expressed in the countenance *; or such as have a tendency (which is the case with various affections of the mind) to improve the *visible* beauty which the features exhibit. Is it surprising, that, to a person who has been accustomed to apply the epithet Beautiful to the smile of complacency and kindness, the same epithet should naturally occur as expressively characteristical of the disposition and temper, which it is the study of Beauty to display, when solicitous to assume her most winning form? Such transitions in the use of words, are daily exemplified in all the various subjects about which language is employed: And, in the present instance, the transition is so easy and obvious, that we are at a loss to say which is the literal and which the metaphorical meaning.

In the cases which have been hitherto under our consideration, the *visible object*, if it is not the *physical cause*, furnishes, at least, the *occasion* of the pleasure we feel; and it is on the *eye alone* that any organic impression is supposed to be made.

" tioque ab oculis ad animum transferens, multo etiam magis pulchritudinem, con-
" stantiam, ordinem in consiliis factisque conservandum putat, &c. &c. Formam
" quidem ipsam, Marce filii, et tanquam faciem Honesti vides; quæ, si oculis cernere-
" tur, mirabiles amores (ut ait Plato) excitaret sapientiæ."—De Offic. Lib. i.

* Ποτερον ουν νομιζεις ἡδιον ὁρᾶν τους ανθρωπους, ὁταν ὦσιν τα καλα τε κ'αγαθα καὶ αγαπητα ηθη φαινεται, η ὁταν τα αισχρα τε καὶ πονηρα, καὶ μισητα.—Xen. Mem. Lib. iii. cap. x.

Our other senses, indeed, frequently contribute to the effect; but they do so only through the medium of the associating principle, when, by its means, the pleasures originally derived from them are blended and identified with those peculiar to vision.

The same observation is applicable to all the various moral and intellectual enjoyments, which, by combining themselves with the effects of colours and of forms, may embellish the original beauties of those material objects, which, while they please the eye, exercise the understanding, awaken the fancy, or touch the heart. Hence, to a botanist, the luxury of a garden, where every thing is arranged with a view to his favourite study; hence, to the poet, the charms of a romantic retreat; hence, to every mind alive to the common sympathies of nature, the inspiring influence of scenes consecrated to the memory of worth, of valour, or of genius.

There is, however, nothing which places, in so strong a light, the truth of the preceding remarks, as the *consent* of all mankind in applying the word Beautiful to order, to fitness, to utility, to symmetry; above all, to that skill and comprehensiveness, and unity of design, which, combining a multitude of parts into one agreeable whole, blend the charms of variety with that of simplicity. All of these circumstances are calculated to give pleasure to the *understanding*; but as this

pleasure is conveyed through the medium of the *eye*, they are universally confounded with the pleasing qualities which form the direct objects of its physical perceptions *.

The only other external sense, to the objects of which the epithet Beautiful is directly and immediately applied, is that of *hearing*. But this use of the word appears to me to be plainly *transitive*, arising, in part, from the general disposition we have to apply to one class of our perceptions, the epithets strictly appropriated to the agreeable qualities perceived by another. It is thus we speak of the *soft verdure* of the fields, and of the *sweet song* of the nightingale †; and that we sometimes heap, one upon another, these heterogeneous epithets, in the same description.

> " *Softly-sweet* in Lydian *measures*."

The poverty of language is partly the cause of this; but the substitution is, at the same time, pleasingly expressive to the fancy; and its incongruity is never more likely to escape

* I shall have occasion, in another Essay, to make some additional remarks on Utility, Fitness, &c. considered in their relation to the idea of Beauty.

† " It is remarkable that, in some languages, *soft* and *sweet* have but one name. " *Doux*, in French, signifies soft as well as sweet. The Latin *dulcis* and the Italian " *dolce* have, in many cases, the same double signification."—Burke, Part iv. sect. 22.

the severe examination of the judgment, than when the thing we wish to describe has any tendency to excite rapture, to rouse enthusiasm, or even to inspire gaiety.

"Dulce ridentem Lalagen amabo,
"Dulce loquentem."

"Still drink delicious poison from thy eye."

Perhaps it may appear to some, that the general analogy of these *transitions* is sufficient, of itself, independently of all other considerations, to account for the application of the word Beauty to *objects of hearing*. But although this analogy certainly goes a considerable way towards a solution of the problem, it by no means removes the difficulty completely; inasmuch as it suggests no reason why the epithet Beautiful should be applied to agreeable *sounds*, rather than to agreeable *tastes*, or to agreeable *odours*. On a little farther examination, however, we shall find various other circumstances which render the transition much more natural and much more philosophical in the case before us, than it would be in any other class of our perceptions.

(1.) The *picturesque* effect (if I may use the expression) which custom, in many instances, gives to sounds. Thus, the clack of a mill, heard at a distance, conjures up at once to

the mind's eye the simple and cheerful scene which it announces; and thus, though in an incomparably greater degree, the songs which delighted our childhood, transport us into the well-remembered haunts where we were accustomed to hear them. Is it surprising, that, on such occasions, the same language should be sometimes transferred from the things imagined, to those perceptions by which the imagination was awakened?

(2.) The *expressive* power of sounds naturally pathetic. It is thus that the word Beauty, which is at first transferred from the face to the mind, comes to be re-transferred from the mind to the voice; more especially, when its tones express such passions as we have been led, in the manner already explained, to consider as beautiful. Such a transference, which is at all times easy and obvious, seems to be quite unavoidable, when both face and voice, at the same moment, conspire in expressing the same affection or emotion. When the soft tones of female gentleness, and the benignity of an angel-smile, reach the heart at one and the same instant, the emotion which is felt, and the object by which it is excited, engage the whole of our attention; the diversity of organs by which the effect is conveyed disappears altogether; and language spontaneously combines, under one common term, those mixed attractions which are already blended and united in the fancy. The Beauty of a

musical voice, and the Harmony of beautiful features, are accordingly expressions so congenial to our habits of thinking and of feeling, that we are unconscious, when we use them, of departing from their literal or primitive import.

Nor is the case essentially different with some other sounds which, in consequence of early habit, have been very intimately associated with the pleasures of vision. While we are enjoying, in some favourite scene, the beauties of nature, how powerfully do the murmur of fountains, the lowing of cattle, and the melody of birds, enhance the delight! and how irresistibly are we led, by this joint influence of "*rural sights, and rural sounds,*" to confound, in our conceptions and in our speech, these two distinct sources of our pleasure! If, on such occasions, the impressions produced by objects of Sight predominate so far, as to render Beauty and not Harmony or Melody the generic word; this is no more than might be expected, from the principles formerly stated with respect to the peculiar connection between the Eye and the power of Imagination.

The transference being once made in a few instances, the subsequent extension of the term Beauty to musical composition, and to all other cases in which the ear is concerned, will not appear wonderful to those who have been accustomed to study the natural proceedings of the mind, as exhibited in the diversified applications of language.

(3.) The *significant* power of sounds, in consequence of conventional speech. In this way, they every moment present *pictures* to the imagination; and we apply to the description, as to the thing described, (with hardly any consciousness of speaking figuratively), such words as *lively, glowing, luminous, splendid, picturesque.* Hence an obvious account (as will be afterwards stated more fully) of the application of the epithet Beautiful to Poetry; and hence also (if the circumstances already suggested should not be thought sufficient for the purpose) an additional reason for its application to Music; the *natural expression* of which is so often united with the *conventional expression* of her sister art.

These different circumstances, when combined with the general causes, which, in other instances, produce *transitive* uses of words, account, in my opinion, sufficiently for the exclusive restriction (among our different external senses) of the term Beauty to the objects of Sight and of Hearing. To the foregoing considerations, however, I must not omit to add, as a cause conspiring very powerfully to the same end, the intimate association, which, in our apprehensions, is formed between the Eye and the Ear, as the great inlets of our acquired knowledge; as the only *media* by which different Minds can communicate together; and as the organs by which we receive from the material world the two classes of pleasures, which, while they surpass all the rest

in variety and in duration,—are the most completely removed from the grossness of animal indulgence, and the most nearly allied to the enjoyments of the intellect. The unconsciousness we have, in both these senses, of any local impression on our bodily frame, may perhaps help to explain the peculiar facility with which their perceptions blend themselves with other pleasures of a rank still nobler and more refined.—It is these two classes, accordingly, of organical pleasures, which fall exclusively under the cognizance of that power of intellectual Taste, which I propose afterwards to examine; and for the analysis of which, this disquisition, concerning some of the most important of its appropriate objects, seemed to me to form a necessary preparation.

If the view of the subject now given be just, we are at once relieved from all the mystery into which philosophers have been insensibly led, in their theories of Beauty, by too servile an acquiescence in the exploded conclusions of the ancient schools concerning general ideas. Instead of searching for the common idea or essence, which the word Beauty denotes, when applied to colours, to forms, to sounds, to compositions in verse and prose, to mathematical theorems, and to moral qualities, our attention is directed to the natural history of the human mind, and to its natural progress in the employment of speech. The particular exemplifications which I have offered of my general principle, may probably

be exceptionable in various instances; but I cannot help flattering myself with the belief, that the principle itself will bear examination.—Some objections to it, which I can easily anticipate, may perhaps be obviated in part by the following remarks.

Although I have endeavoured to shew that our first notions of Beauty are derived from *colours*, it neither follows, that, in those complex ideas of the Beautiful which we are afterwards led to form in the progress of our experience, this quality must necessarily enter as a component part; nor, where it does so enter, that its effect must necessarily predominate over that of all the others. On the contrary, it may be easily conceived, in what manner its effect comes to be gradually supplanted by those pleasures of a higher cast, with which it is combined; while, at the same time, we continue to apply to the joint result, the language which this *now* subordinate, and seemingly unessential ingredient, originally suggested. It is by a process somewhat similar, that the mental attractions of a beautiful woman supplant those of her person in the heart of her lover; and that, when the former have the good fortune to survive the latter, they appropriate to themselves, by an imperceptible metaphor, that language, which, in its literal sense, has ceased to have a meaning. In this case, a very pleasing arrangement of nature is exhibited; the qualities of Mind which insensibly

stole, in the first instance, those flattering epithets which are descriptive of a *fair exterior*, now restoring their borrowed embellishments, and keeping alive, in the eye of conjugal affection, that Beauty which has long perished to every other.

The progress just remarked, in the instance of Colours, admits of an easy and complete illustration, in the gradual transference of the painter's admiration, (in proportion as his taste is exercised and improved) from the merely organical charms of his art, to its sublimer beauties. It is not that he is less delighted with beautiful colouring than before; but because his Imagination can easily *supply* its absence, when excellencies of a superior order engage his attention *. It is for the same reason, that a masterly sketch with chalk, or with a pencil, gives, to a practised eye, a pleasure to which nothing could be added by the hand of a common artist; and that the relics of ancient statuary, which are beheld with comparative indifference by the vulgar of all countries, are surveyed by men of cultivated taste with still greater rapture, than the forms which live on the glowing canvas of the painter.

Hence too it happens, that, in the progress of Taste, the word Beautiful comes to be more peculiarly appropriated (at least

* See Note (X).

by critics and philosophers) to Beauty in its most complicated and impressive form. In this sense we plainly understand it, when we speak of *analysing* beauty. To Colour, and to the other simple elements which enter into its composition, although we may still, with the most unexceptionable propriety, apply this epithet, we more commonly (as far as I am able to judge) apply the epithet *pleasing*, or some equivalent expression.

I shall only remark farther, on this head, that, in the imitative arts, the most beautiful colours, when they are out of place, or when they do not harmonize with each other, produce an effect which is peculiarly offensive; and that, in articles of dress or of furniture, a passion for *gaudy* decoration is justly regarded as the symptom of a taste for the Beautiful, which is destined never to pass the first stage of infancy.

# CHAPTER SEVENTH.

CONTINUATION OF THE SUBJECT.—OBJECTIONS TO A THEORY OF BEAUTY PROPOSED BY FATHER BUFFIER AND SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

BEFORE I conclude these disquisitions concerning the influence of Association on our ideas of the Beautiful, I think it proper to take some notice of a theory upon the subject, adopted by two very eminent men, Father Buffier and Sir Joshua Reynolds, according to which we are taught, that "the effect of Beauty depends on Habit alone; the most "customary form in each species of things being invariably "the most beautiful."

"A beautiful nose" for example, (to borrow Mr Smith's short, but masterly illustration of Buffier's principle) "is one "that is neither very long nor very short; neither very "straight nor very crooked; but a sort of middle among all

" these extremes, and less different from any one of them,
" than all of them are from one another. It is the form
" which nature seems to have aimed at in them all; which,
" however she deviates from in a great variety of ways, and
" very rarely hits exactly, but to which all these deviations
" still bear a very strong resemblance.——In each
" species of creatures, what is most beautiful bears the strong-
" est characters of the general fabric of the species, and has
" the strongest resemblance to the greater part of the indivi-
" duals with which it is classed. Monsters, on the contrary,
" or what is perfectly deformed, are always most singular
" and odd, and have the least resemblance to the generality
" of that species to which they belong. And thus, the beau-
" ty of each species, though, in one sense, the rarest of all
" things, because few individuals hit the middle form exact-
" ly, yet in another, is the most common, because all the de-
" viations from it resemble it more than they resemble one
" another *."

The same opinion has been since stated, in much stronger and more explicit terms, by a still higher authority than Buffier,—Sir Joshua Reynolds.

" Every species" (he observes) " of the animal as well as

* Theory of Moral Sentiments.

"the vegetable creation, may be said to have a fixed or de-
"terminate form, towards which Nature is continually in-
"clining, like various lines terminating in the centre; and, as
"these lines all cross the centre, though only one passes
"through any other point, so it will be found, that perfect
"beauty is oftener produced by nature than deformity: I
"do not mean than deformity in general, but than any one
"kind of deformity. To instance, in a particular part of a
"feature, the line that forms the ridge of the nose is beauti-
"ful when it is straight. This, then, is the central form,
"which is oftener found than either concave, convex, or
"any other irregular form that shall be proposed. As we
"are then more accustomed to beauty than to deformity,
"we may conclude that to be the reason why we approve
"and admire it, as we approve and admire customs and
"fashions of dress for no other reason than that we are used
"to them; so that, though habit and custom cannot be said
"to be the cause of beauty, it is certainly the cause of our
"liking it: And I have no doubt, but that, if we were more
"used to deformity than beauty, deformity would then lose
"the idea now annexed to it, and take that of beauty; as if
"the whole world should agree, that *yes* and *no* should
"change their meaning; *yes* would then deny, and *no* would
"affirm *."

* Idler, No. 82. See also Reynolds's Works by Malone, 2d Edit. p. 237.

As this theory has plainly taken its rise from a misconception of the manner in which the principle of Association operates, the objections to it which I have to offer, form a natural sequel to the discussions contained in the preceding chapter.

Among these objections, what strikes myself with the greatest force, is,—that, granting the theory to be *just*, so far as it goes, it does not at all touch the main difficulty it professes to resolve. Admitting it to be a fact, (as I very readily do, in the sense in which the proposition is explained by Reynolds), "That *in each species of things*, the most customary form is the "most beautiful;" and supposing, for the sake of argument, that this fact warranted the very illogical inference, "That "the effect of Beauty *in that species* depends on habit alone;" the question still remains to be answered; on what *principle* do we pronounce the Beauty of one *species* to be greater than that of another? To satisfy the conditions of the problem, it is obviously necessary, not only to shew how one Rose comes to be considered as more beautiful than another Rose; one Peacock as more beautiful than another Peacock; one Woman as more beautiful than another Woman; but to explain why the Rose is pronounced to be more beautiful than the Dandelion, the Peacock more beautiful than the Stork, and a Beautiful Woman to be the masterpiece of Nature's handywork. To such questions as

these, the theory of Reynolds does not furnish even the shadow of a reply.

This, however, is not the only objection to which it is liable. When applied to account for the comparative Beauty of *different things of the same kind*, it will be found altogether unsatisfactory and erroneous.

In proof of this assertion, it is almost sufficient to mention the consequence to which it obviously and necessarily leads, according to the acknowledgment of its ingenious authors;—That no individual object is fitted to give pleasure to the spectator, previous to a course of comparative observations on a number of other objects of the same kind. It will afterwards appear, that, in adopting this idea, Buffier and Reynolds have confounded the principle of Taste, (which is an acquired power, implying comparison and reflection) with our natural susceptibility of the pleasing effect which Beauty produces. In the mean time, it is of more importance to remark, that neither of these writers has attempted to assign any reason *why* a pleasing effect should be connected with those qualities which are most commonly to be observed in Nature; and therefore, granting that the general fact corresponds with their statement, it remains to be considered, whether particular objects are perceived to be Beautiful, in consequence of their coincidence with those arrangements at

which Nature appears to aim; or whether our perception of this coincidence be not a subsequent discovery, founded on a comparison of her productions with some notions of Beauty previously formed. To say, with Reynolds, that "we approve "and admire Beauty because we are more accustomed to it "than Deformity; as we approve and admire customs and "fashions of dress, for no other reason than that we are "used to them," is manifestly an imperfect solution of the difficulty. Even in the article of dress, it is not custom alone, but the example of those whom we look up to as patterns worthy of imitation;—that is, it is not the custom of the many, but the fashion of the few, which has the chief influence on our judgments; and consequently admitting (what I am by no means disposed to yield) that one mode of dress is, in itself, as beautiful as another, this concession would only afford an additional illustration of the power of the associating principle, without proving any thing in favour of that conclusion which Reynolds wishes to establish.

Nor is the instance of monstrous animal productions, appealed to by Buffier, more in point. The disgust which they excite, seems to arise principally from some idea of pain or suffering connected with their existence; or from the obvious unfitness of the structure of the individual for the destined purposes of his species. No similar emotion is excited by an analogous appearance in the vegetable, or in the mi-

neral kingdoms; or even by those phenomena which contradict the uniform tenor of our past experience, with respect to Nature's most obvious and familiar laws. What occurrence so constantly presented to our senses as the fall of heavy bodies! yet nobody ever thought of applying to it the epithet *beautiful*. The rise of a column of smoke is a comparative rarity; and yet how often has it amused the eye of the infant, of the painter, of the poet, and of the philosopher!—Although the human form be necessarily fixed by its own gravity, to the surface of this globe, how beautiful are those pictures of ancient poetry, in which the Gods are represented as transporting themselves, at pleasure, between earth and heaven! Even the genius of Shakespeare, in attempting to amplify the graces of a favourite Hero, has reserved for the last place in the climax, an attitude suggested by this imaginary attribute of the heathen divinities.

> "A station, like the herald Mercury,
> "New lighted on a heaven-kissing hill."

A still more obvious example, leading to the same conclusion, may be drawn from the agreeable effects of *lights and colours*; the very appearances from which I conceive our first notions of beauty are derived. Few, I presume, will venture to assert, that it is altogether owing to custom, that the eye delights to repose itself on the soft verdure of a field;

or that there is nothing naturally attractive in the splendid illuminations of summer. From the regular vicissitudes of day and of night, custom (if nothing else were to operate) should entitle them both, in the same degree, to the appellation of Beautiful; but such, certainly, has not been the judgment of mankind in any age of the world. "Truly the "light is sweet, and it is a pleasant thing for the eyes to be-"hold the sun."

The criticisms which I have hazarded on the speculations of these writers do not affect the certainty, nor detract from the importance of the assumption on which they proceed. The only point in dispute is, whether individual objects please in consequence of their approximation to the usual forms and colours of Nature; or whether Nature herself is not pronounced to be Beautiful, in consequence of the regular profusion in which she exhibits forms and colours intrinsically pleasing. Upon either supposition, great praise is due to those who have so happily illustrated the process by which taste is guided in the study of *ideal beauty*; a process which Reynolds must be allowed to have traced and described with admirable sagacity, even by such as think the most lightly of the metaphysical doctrine which he has blended with his statement of the fact.

I must own, indeed, that it was not without some sur-

prise, I first read the Essay in which the opinion I have now been controverting is proposed by this great artist. To have found the same paradox in the works of an abstract philosopher, however distinguished for ingenuity and learning, would have been entirely of a piece with the other extravagancies which abound in books of science; but it is difficult to reconcile the genuine enthusiasm with which Reynolds appears to have enjoyed the Beauties, both of Nature and of Art, with the belief, that "if Beauty were as rare as "deformity now is, and deformity as prevalent as actual "Beauty, these words would entirely change their present "meanings, in the same manner in which the word *yes* might "become a negative, and *no* an affirmative, in consequence "of a general convention among mankind." The truth has probably been, that, in the judgment of Reynolds, (as too often happens with all men in the more serious concerns of life,) a prepossession in favour of a particular conclusion, added verisimilitude to the premises of which it was supposed to be the consequence; and that a long experience of the practical value of the maxim which it was his leading object to recommend, blinded him to the absurdity of the theory which he employed to support it *.

* See Note (Y).

# ON THE BEAUTIFUL.

## *PART SECOND.*

### ON THE BEAUTIFUL, WHEN PRESENTED TO THE POWER OF IMAGINATION.

FROM the account given of Conception in my Analysis of the intellectual faculties *, it appears, that we have a power of *representing* to ourselves the absent objects of our perceptions, and also the sensations which we remember to have felt. I can *picture out*, for example, in my own mind,—or (to express myself without a metaphor) I can *think upon* any remarkable building, or any remarkable scene with which I am familiarly acquainted. I can, in like manner, (though by no means with the same distinctness and steadiness) think of the Smell of a Rose, of the Taste of a Pine-Apple, or of

* See Philosophy of the Human Mind.

the Sound of a Trumpet. In consequence of the various functions of this power, which extend to the provinces of all the different senses, the old English writers, (after the example of the schoolmen) frequently distinguish it by the title of *Sensus Communis*, a phrase which they employ precisely in the same acceptation in which I use the word Conception. It is in this way that the phrase *common sense* (which has now so many other meanings, both popular and philosophical) is employed by Sir John Davis, in his Poem on the Immortality of the Soul; by Dr Cudworth in his Treatise of Immutable Morality; and by many others both of an earlier and of a later date.

To the peculiar ease and vivacity with which we can recal the perceptions of Sight, it is owing, that our thoughts are incomparably more frequently occupied in such visual *representations*, than in conceiving Smells, Tastes, or Sounds; and that, when we think of these last sensations, we generally strive to lay hold of them by means of some visible object with which they are associated. I can easily, for example, think of the form and colour of a Rose, with little or no idea of its *smell*; but when I wish to conceive the *smell* as distinctly as possible, I find that the most effectual means I can use, is to conceive the flower itself to be presented to my eye. The sense of Sight, accordingly, maintains the same pre-eminence over our other senses, in furnishing materials

to the power of Conception, that, in its actual exercise, belongs to it, as the great channel of our acquired information, and the habitual *medium* of our intercourse with things external. If there is any difference between the two cases, its pre-eminence is still more remarkable in the former than in the latter.

In treating of the Beauty of Perceptible Objects, I have already endeavoured to explain how this word comes to be applied to qualities specifically and essentially different from each other, in consequence of the indivisible simplicity of the emotion which they excite in the mind, while they are presented to it at one and the same moment. The solution is more obviously satisfactory, where these qualities produce their effect through the same common channel of Vision; and this they do in every case, but that of the beauties which we are supposed to perceive by the organ of Hearing. *There*, it must be owned, the former principles do not apply in all their extent; but to compensate for any deficiency in their application to this class of our pleasures, a variety of peculiarities were mentioned as characteristical of Sounds, which seem to me to place their beauties nearly on a footing with those which are more immediately attached to the perceptions of the eye. The same observations hold still more completely with respect to the corresponding Conceptions of these different qualities. The features of a Beautiful Woman; the amiable af-

fections which they express; and the musical tones which accord with this expression, however intimately connected in our thoughts when the object is before us, are united still more completely, when the power of Conception (the *Sensus Communis* of the intellect) attempts to grasp them all in one combination. In this last case, too, it is *the picture* alone which strongly and permanently fixes the attention; and its agreeable concomitants add to the effect rather by the association of fugitive impressions or feelings, than by that of Conceptions, on which we are able steadily to dwell.

The manner in which Conception is subservient to Imagination, and the grounds of that conspicuous and prominent place which, in all the creations of the latter power, is invariably occupied by *images* borrowed from Sight, have been already sufficiently explained. It is from the sense of Sight accordingly (as was formerly remarked) that Imagination has derived its name; and it is extremely worthy of observation, that to this power, and to the nearly allied one of Fancy, the epithet Beautiful has exclusively been applied among all our various intellectual faculties. We speak of a beautiful imagination, and a beautiful fancy; and to the poet, who is supposed to unite both, we ascribe a beautiful genius.

But it is not to *visible things*, nor to conceptions derived by any of our senses from the *material* world, that the pro-

vince of Imagination is confined. We may judge of this from that combination of intellectual gratifications which we receive through the medium of Poetry; an art which addresses itself, in the first instance, to the ear; but which aspires to unite with the organic charm of numbers, whatever pleasures imagination is able to supply. These pleasures (as I have elsewhere observed) are as various as the objects of human thought, and the sources of human happiness. "All "the beauties of external nature;" (if I may be allowed to quote here a few sentences from another work;) "all that "is amiable or interesting, or respectable in human cha- "racter; all that excites and engages our benevolent af- "fections; all those truths which make the heart feel itself "better and more happy;—all these supply materials, out of "which the poet forms and peoples a world of his own, where "no inconveniencies damp our enjoyments, and where no "shades darken our prospects."

"The measured composition in which the poet expresses "himself, is only one of the means which he employs to please. "As the delight which he conveys to the imagination is "heightened by the other agreeable impressions which he "can unite in the mind at the same time, he studies to be- "stow, upon the medium of communication which he em- "ploys, all the various beauties of which it is susceptible. "Among these, the harmony of numbers is not the least

" powerful; for its effect is constant, and does not interfere " with any of the other pleasures which language produces. " A succession of agreeable perceptions is kept up by the organical effect of words upon the ear, while they inform the " understanding by their perspicuity and precision, or please " the imagination by the pictures they suggest, or touch the " heart by the associations they awaken. Of all these charms " of language the poet may avail himself; and they are all " so many instruments of his art. To the philosopher, or to " the orator, they may *occasionally* be of use; and to both " they must be *constantly* so far an object of study, that " nothing may occur in their compositions which may distract the attention, by offending either the ear or the taste: " but the poet must not rest satisfied with this negative praise. " Pleasure is the end of his art; and the more numerous " the sources of it which he can open, the greater will be the " effect produced by the efforts of his genius *."

To my own mind, the above passage appears to throw a strong light on the subject which is under our consideration at present. In the same manner in which the *Eye* (while we actually look abroad upon nature) attaches to its appropriate objects so great a variety of pleasures, both physical and moral; so to the poet, *Language* serves as a

* Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind.

common channel or organ for uniting all the agreeable impressions of which the senses, the understanding, and the heart, are susceptible:—And as the word Beauty is naturally transferred from colours and forms to the other pleasing qualities which may be associated with these, and to the various moral qualities of which they may be expressive; so the same word is insensibly extended from those *images* which form at once the characteristical feature, and the most fascinating charm of poetry, to the numberless other sources of delight which it opens *.

The meaning of the word Beautiful become thus infinitely more general than before; and of course, the objects of Taste are infinitely multiplied. In treating, accordingly, of that intellectual power, (which I propose to do in another Essay) I shall confine my attention chiefly to *Poetical Taste*; not only because it embraces a far wider range of Beauties than any other, but as it presupposes a certain degree of Taste in the more confined and less liberal arts; while it

* Of the relation which the charm of *Beautiful Imagery* bears to the other pleasures of which language is the vehicle, Cowley seems to have formed an idea, equally poetical and just, in the following simile, which he applies to the copious and figurative eloquence of his friend Dr Sprat.

"It does, like Thames, the best of rivers, glide;
"And his bright fancy, all the way,
"Does, like the sunshine, in it play."

Ode to the Royal Society.

implies, in a far greater degree than any of them, that combination of the best gifts of the head and heart which is expressed in our language by the word *Soul*. The process, at the same time, by which Taste is formed, in all its various applications, will be found to be explicable on the same common principles.

Another reason for selecting the creations of Imagination in preference to the objects of Sense, as examples to illustrate my reasonings concerning Taste in general, is suggested by a remarkable circumstance in their nature, which has been too little attended to by philosophers: That these creations possess, in many instances, charms which are incomparably more attractive than the realities from which they ultimately derive their origin. Of this very curious fact, (so contrary to every conclusion that could have been formed *à priori*) the following imperfect hints may perhaps afford some explanation.

1. The materials out of which the combinations of Imagination are formed, although limited in point of *kind*, by the variety of real objects, are by no means thus limited in point of *degree*. We can imagine Rocks and Mountains more sublime, Forests more extensive and awful, Rivers more vast and impetuous, than the eye has ever beheld. In like manner, we can add, in degree, to the qualities, both physi-

cal and mental, of our species;—to their strength, to their genius, to their virtue. But perhaps it will be found, that these exaggerations of the Imagination are confined chiefly to things susceptible of augmentation, in respect of magnitude or of number; or at least, that it is chiefly in instances of this sort (where the effect aimed at is rather Sublimity than Beauty) that such exaggerations are pleasing.

2. Imagination, by her powers of selection and of combination, can render her productions more perfect than those which are exhibited in the natural world. Defects may be supplied; redundancies and blemishes removed; and the excellencies of different individuals may be united into one whole. In such cases, it cannot, with strict propriety, be said, that Imagination *creates* the Beauties she exhibits. She derives them not from her own internal resources; but, by a careful study of Nature, she employs one part of her works to correct another, and collects into a single ideal object, the charms that are scattered among a multitude of realities. Nor does this remark apply merely to the beauty of material forms; it may be extended (under proper limitations) to the representations given, in works of imagination, of human life, and of the characters and manners of mankind. By skilful selections and combinations, characters more exalted and more pleasing may be drawn, than have ever fallen under our observation; and a series of events may be exhi-

bited in complete consonance with our moral feelings. Rewards and punishments may be distributed by the poet, with an exact regard to the merits of individuals; and those irregularities in the distribution of happiness and misery which furnish the subject of so many complaints in real life, may be corrected in the world created by his genius. Here, too, the poet borrows from Nature, the model after which he copies; not only as he accommodates his imaginary arrangements to his own unperverted sense of justice, but as he accommodates them to the *general laws* by which the world is governed; for whatever exceptions may occur in particular instances, there can be no more doubt of the fact, that virtue is the direct road to happiness, and vice to misery, than that, in the material universe, blemishes and defects are lost among prevailing beauty and order.

3. The poet can arrange the succession of the various emotions which he wishes to excite, in such a manner as to make the transition agreeable from one to another; and sometimes to delight his reader by skilful contrasts. In this respect also, by a careful study of nature, he may learn to communicate to his productions agreeable effects, which natural objects and real events do not always possess.

A beauty of this kind in Shakespeare has been finely remarked by Sir Joshua Reynolds. After the awful scene in

which Macbeth relates to his wife the particulars of his interview with the weird sisters; and where the design is conceived of accomplishing their predictions that very night, by the murder of the king; how grateful is the sweet and tranquil picture presented to the fancy, in the dialogue between the King and Banquo, before the castle-gate:

> "This castle hath a pleasant site; the air
> "Nimbly and swiftly recommends itself
> "Unto our general sense."———
> ———"This guest of summer,
> "The temple-haunting martlet, does approve
> "By his lov'd mansionry, that heaven's breath
> "Smells wooingly here. No jutting frieze,
> "Buttrice, nor coigne of vantage, but this bird
> "Hath made his pendant bed, and procreant cradle.
> "Where they most breed and haunt, I have observ'd
> "The air is delicate."

Reynolds compares the effect of this, to what is called *repose* in painting.—This skilful management of our pleasant and painful emotions, so as to produce a result that is delightful on the whole, is practicable in all the arts which are addressed to the Imagination. In real life, we know too well, how much the succession of our pleasures and pains depends on causes beyond our controul.

Many exemplifications of the same thing are to be found

in the ancient Poets. The finest of them all, perhaps, is Homer's description of the shield of Achilles, where the battles and sieges are, with such transcendent art, contrasted with the harvest, the vintage, and the pastoral scenes of peace.

4. Although, when we analyse the combinations of imagination into their component elements, the pleasure produced by each of these may be weaker than that arising from the correspondent *perception*; yet it is possible to communicate to the mind, in a short space of time, so immense a number of these fainter impressions, as to occasion a much greater degree of pleasure, in the general result. The succession of events in the natural world, although sufficiently varied to prevent satiety and languor, is seldom so rapid as to keep pace with the restlessness of our wishes. But the imagination can glance, in the same moment, "from heaven to "earth, from earth to heaven;" and can, at will, shift the scene, from the gloom and desolation of winter, to the promises of spring, or the glories of summer and autumn. In accounting for the powerful effect which the pleasures of imagination occasionally produce, I am disposed to lay peculiar stress on this last circumstance;—the rapidity with which they may be made to succeed each other, and, of consequence, the number of them that may be concentrated into an instant of time. A considerable part of what Mr Gilpin remarks, in the following passage, concerning the effects of

the plano-convex mirror, in surveying landscapes, may be applied to the subject now before us; and I am much pleased to find, that this analogy has not escaped the notice of that ingenious writer.

"In wooded scenes, the plano-convex mirror, which was "Mr Gray's companion in all his tours, has a pleasing effect. "*Distances*, indeed, reduced to so small a surface, are lost: it "is chiefly calculated for objects at hand, which it shews to "more advantage. When we examine nature at large, we "study composition and effect: we examine also the forms "of particular objects. But, from the size of the objects of "nature, the eye cannot perform both these operations at "once. If it be engaged in general effects, it postpones "particular objects; and, if it be fixed on particular objects, "whose forms and tints it gathers up with a passing glance "from one to another, it is not at leisure to observe general "effects.

"But, in the minute exhibitions of the convex mirror, "composition, forms, and colours, are brought closer toge-"ther, and the eye examines the general effect, the forms of "the objects, and the beauty of the tints, in one complex "view. As the colours, too, are the very colours of nature, "and equally well harmonized, they are the more brilliant, "as they are the more condensed. In a chaise, particular-

" ly, the exhibitions of the convex mirror are amusing. We " are rapidly carried from one object to another. A succes- " sion of high-coloured objects is continually gliding before " the eye. *They are like the visions of the imagination, or the " brilliant landscapes of a dream.* Forms and colours, in " brightest array, fleet before us; and, if the transient glance " of a good composition happen to unite with them, we " should give any price to fix and appropriate the scene *."

The four different considerations now suggested will, I hope, throw some light on the point which they are meant to illustrate. At the same time, I am sensible that much remains to be explained, in order to account completely for the different effects produced by the combinations of imagination, and by the realities from which their materials are collected. On this very curious and fertile question, however, I must here content myself with remarking, how strikingly discriminated, in various respects, the laws are, which regulate the pleasures we derive from these two sources; insomuch, that a separate consideration of both is necessary to all who wish to think with justness and accuracy of either. Nor is the distinction between them of use in theory only: it is of important practical utility; and deserves more atten-

* Gilpin's Tours, &c. &c. Vol. II. p. 225.

tion than it has yet attracted, from all who cultivate the fine arts. It was for this reason chiefly that I have kept it in view, as steadily as possible, through the whole of the foregoing speculations concerning the Beautiful. An illustration of some of the mistakes which have originated in an indiscriminate application to the various objects of taste, of conclusions deduced from a partial study of them, could not fail to place in a light still stronger the necessity of a more accurate analysis than has hitherto been attempted, of the general principles connected with this branch of the philosophy of the human mind. But I have already far transgressed the limits which I had allotted to the subject of this Essay; and must now dismiss it, for the present, with a few cursory remarks.

It has been often observed by those who have treated of the principles of criticism, from the time of Aristotle downwards, that many things which are offensive in the reality may nevertheless furnish pleasing materials for works of imagination, and even pleasing subjects for the imitative arts: And, although I am far from considering the argument as completely exhausted by any of the writers whom I have happened to consult, yet, as the *fact* is now universally admitted, I shall rather direct the attention of my readers, on this occasion, to a proposition not altogether so common, though equally indisputable;—That some things which we

see without offence, and even with pleasure, in real life, would excite disgust, if introduced into a work of imagination.

How many unexpected combinations of circumstances do we meet with, not only in history, but in the daily intercourse of society, which we should not hesitate to pronounce unnatural and improbable, if they occurred in a novel! In real life, this very singularity amuses by the surprise it occasions; but, in a professed work of imagination, the surprise offends us, by suggesting doubts about the fidelity of the representation *. In a work of imagination, besides, our pleasure arises, in part, from our admiration of the skill of the artist; and this is never so strongly displayed, as when extraordinary events are brought about by a series of ordinary and natural occurrences. An incident, on the other hand, out of the common course of human affairs, strikes us as a blemish, by seeming to betray a poverty of invention and genius in the author.

* "Le vrai peut quelquefois n'être pas vraisemblable."—Boileau.

Aristotle had plainly a similar idea in his mind, when he remarked, that "nothing "hinders, but that some *true* events may possess that *probability*, the invention of "which entitles an author to the name of *Poet*."

See a very judicious note of Mr Twining's on this passage; and a curious quotation to the same purpose which he has produced from Diderot.—Translation of Aristotle's Treatise on Poetry, pp. 88, 408.

It is chiefly owing to this, that all *casual* events are unpleasing in fictitious writing, when they are employed as contrivances to bring about the catastrophe. It is perfectly agreeable to the course of nature, that a man, seemingly in good health, should drop down in a fit of apoplexy; but a play would be quite ludicrous which admitted such an incident. We may form some judgment of this, from the disagreeable impression produced in Shakespeare's *King John*, by the fate of Arthur after his escape from Hubert. For the same reason, I am inclined to doubt, whether the story of Fiesco, Count of Lavagna, which, in some of its circumstances, is so admirably adapted for the stage, is fitted, on the whole, to form the ground-work of a tragedy: And yet his accidental death has a wonderfully fine effect in Dr Robertson's narrative *.

Something analogous to this may be remarked in landscape-painting; in which (as Mr Wheatley observes) there are many things that would offend us, which are pleasing in reality. For an illustration of this, he has selected, very happily, the beautiful pleasure-grounds at *Islam* in Derbyshire; a scene,

* In the very interesting play to which Schiller has prefixed the title of *Fieseo*, he has, with great judgment, departed, in this essential particular, from the truth of history.—Machiavel is said to have projected a dramatic performance on the same subject

"where" (to quote his own description) "nature seems to "have delighted to bring distances together; where two "rivers, which were ingulphed many miles asunder, issue "from their subterraneous passages, the one often muddy "when the other is clear, within a few paces of each other; "but they appear only to lose themselves again, for they im- "mediately unite their streams, just in time to fall into ano- "ther current, which also runs through the garden."—"Such "whimsical wonders," (he very justly adds) "lose their ef- "fect, when represented in a picture, or mimicked in ground "artificially laid. As accidents they may surprise; but they "are not objects of choice."

To these observations we may add, that even where every thing appears perfectly natural and probable in a work of imagination, it may yet offend the taste, by exhibiting what would be highly pleasing in a historical composition. There are few books more interesting than Hume's History of England; but, if we conceived the events to be fictitious, it would make a very indifferent romance. The truth seems to be, that in a piece, where the story is plainly a fabrication, and where even the names of the characters are fictitious, it is impossible to keep up the reader's interest, without a plot, which evidently advances as the work proceeds, and to which all the various incidents are conceived to be somehow or other subservient. Hence the stress laid by so many critics,

ancient and modern, on the importance of *unity of fable,* in epic, and still more in tragic poetry. Nor do the historical plays of Shakespeare furnish a real exception to the general remark. Some of the most popular of these, it must indeed be confessed, consist entirely of a series of incidents, which have little or no connection but what they derive from their supposed relation to the fortunes of the same man. But such pieces, it will be found, do not interest and affect us, on the same principles with works of imagination. We conceive them to exhibit *facts* which really happened, considering them partly in the light of dramatic performances, and partly of histories; and, in consequence of this, make allowance for many details, which, in a fable professedly the offspring of the poet's invention, we should have pronounced to be absurd.

It would be worth while to examine what kind of incidents please in fictitious composition; and to ascertain the principles and rules of this kind of writing. What has been already observed is sufficient to shew, that the pleasure we derive from it is not owing merely to its enlarging the narrow limits of real history, by new and unheard of events; but to something peculiar in the nature of the events, and in the manner of connecting them together.

After all, however, less practical danger is to be apprehend-

ed from transferring to the imitative arts, those habits of feeling and judging which have been formed by actual experience and observation, than from a transference to human life and external nature, of ideas borrowed from the imitative arts. If, in the former case, an artist may be disappointed in producing the agreeable effect at which he aims; in the latter, he may expect the more serious inconvenience of contracting a fantastic singularity of opinions and manners, or of impairing his relish for the primary beauties which nature exhibits.

A long and exclusive familiarity with fictitious narratives (it has been often observed) has a tendency to weaken the interest we take in the ordinary business of the world; and the slightest attempt to fashion the manners after such models as they supply, never fails to appear ludicrous in the extreme. The case is nearly similar with the painter who applies, to the beauties of a rich and varied prospect, the rules of his own limited art; or who, in the midst of such a scene, loses its general effect, in the contemplation of some accidental combination of circumstances suited to his canvas. But on this point I have already enlarged at sufficient length.

I intended to have prosecuted still farther, the subject of this Essay, and to have added to it some supplemental observations on the import of the word Beauty, when applied to Virtue;

to Philosophical Theories; to Geometrical Propositions, and to some other classes of Scientific Discoveries; in all of which instances, the principles already stated will be found to afford an easy explanation of various apparent anomalies in the use of the expression. Enough, however, has been already said, for the purposes I have in view in the sequel of this volume; and I shall, therefore, reserve the topics now mentioned for future discussion.

# ESSAY SECOND.

## ON THE SUBLIME.

### PREFACE.

My thoughts were first turned particularly to this subject, by the opposite judgments which have been lately pronounced on the merits of Mr Burke's theory of the Sublime, by two writers of great originality, acuteness, and taste,—Mr Price and Mr Knight. The former of these gentlemen having done me the honour, in spring 1808, to allow me the perusal of a very valuable supplement to what he has already published in defence of the doctrines of his late illustrious friend, I was induced to commit to writing, a few hasty and unconnected notes, on some incidental points to which his manuscript had attracted my attention. It was upon this occasion, that the leading idea occurred to me which runs through the whole of the following Essay; and which I had the boldness to communicate to Mr Price, in

the very crude form in which it at first presented itself. At that period, I had little or no intention to prosecute it any farther; but having afterwards recollected its close analogy to a principle which forms the basis of the foregoing speculations concerning the Beautiful, I resolved to resume the consideration of it more deliberately, as soon as my necessary engagements should permit; in the hope that the two discussions might reflect additional lights on each other. In this I flatter myself that I have not been altogether disappointed; and accordingly, I have placed them together, in arranging the materials of this volume; although without any direct references in either to the parallel train of thought pursued in the other. An attentive reader will be able easily to collect for himself the general results to which they lead.

The Essay on the Beautiful has been lying by me, much in the same state in which it now appears, for several years. The greater part of that on the Sublime, (with the exception of a few pages, which I have copied very nearly from the notes transmitted to Mr Price) was written last summer, during a short residence in a distant part of the country, where I had no opportunity whatever of consulting books. I mention this merely to account for the selection of my illustrations, many of which, I am sensible, may appear too hackneyed to be introduced into a disquisition, which it would have been desirable to enliven and adorn by examples

possessing something more of the zest of novelty and variety. At first, I intended to have corrected this fault, as far as I was able, in transcribing my papers for the press; but, on more mature reflection, it struck me forcibly, that the quotations which had offered themselves spontaneously to my memory, while engaged in the consideration of general principles, were likely, from the very circumstance of their triteness, to possess some important advantages over any that I could substitute in their place. They shew, at least, by their familiarity to every ear, that I have not gone far out of my way, in quest of instances to support a preconceived hypothesis; and afford a presumption, that the conclusions to which I have been led, are the natural result of impressions and associations not confined to a small number of individuals. Whether indolence may not have contributed somewhat to fortify me in these opinions, it is now too late for me to consider.

# ON THE SUBLIME.

## CHAPTER FIRST.

### OF SUBLIMITY, IN THE LITERAL SENSE OF THE WORD.

AMONG the writers who have hitherto attempted to ascertain the nature of the Sublime, it has been very generally, if not universally taken for granted, that there must exist some common quality in all the various objects characterized by this common epithet. In their researches, however, concerning the essential constituent of Sublimity, the conclusions to which they have been led are so widely different from each other, that one would scarcely suppose, on a superficial view, they could possibly relate to the same class of phenomena;—a circumstance the more remarkable, that, in the statement of these phenomena, philosophical critics are, with a few trifling exceptions, unanimously agreed.

Mr Burke seems disposed to think, that the essence of the sublime is *the terrible, operating either openly or more latently* *. Helvetius has adopted the same general idea, but has expressed it (in my opinion) rather more precisely; asserting, that "the sublime of imagery always supposes *an emotion of terror* "*begun;* and that it cannot be produced by any other cause†." Dr Blair, with great diffidence, has hazarded a conjecture, that the solution of the problem is to be found in the idea of *mighty power or force;* and Mr Knight has lately contended for a theory which ascribes the effect in question to the influence of *mental energy,* exciting a sympathetic energy in the mind of the speetator or of the reader. According to Lord Kames, "a beautiful object, *placed high,* appearing more "agreeable than formerly, produces in the spectator a new "emotion, termed *the emotion of sublimity;* and every other "emotion, *resembling* this emotion of elevation, is called by "the same name ‡." Longinus, who confined his attention

* In one passage, he asserts this in very unqualified terms: "Terror is, in all cases "whatsoever, either more openly or latently, the ruling principle of the sublime."—(Part ii. Sect. 2.)

In other instances he expresses himself more guardedly; speaking of Terror as only *one* of the sources, though one of the chief sources of Sublimity.

† De l'Homme, de ses facultés, et de son éducation.

‡ "Thus generosity is said to be an *elevated* emotion, as well as great courage; "and that firmness of soul which is superior to misfortunes, obtains the peculiar "name of *magnanimity.* On the other hand, every emotion that contracts the mind,

to the Sublime in writing, contented himself with remarking one of its characteristical *effects*; "that it fills the reader with "a glorying, and sense of inward greatness:"—A remark which has been sanctioned by the concurrent approbation of all succeeding critics, however widely they have differed in their conclusions concerning the specific *cause* with which the effect is connected.

In consequence of these attempts to resolve all the different kinds of Sublimity into one single principle, a great deal of false refinement has been displayed in bending facts to preconceived systems. The speculations of Mr Burke himself are far from being invulnerable in this point of view; although he may justly claim the merit of having taken a more comprehensive survey of his subject, and of having combined, in his induction, a far more valuable collection of particular illustrations, than any of his predecessors.

It appears to me, that none of these theorists have paid sufficient attention to the word *sublime* in its literal and

"and fixeth it upon things trivial or of no importance, is termed *low*, by its *resem-* "*blance* to a little or low object of sight: thus an appetite for trifling amusements "is called a *low taste*. Sentiments and even expressions, are characterized in the "same manner: an expression or sentiment that raises the mind is denominated "*great* or *elevated*; and hence the SUBLIME in poetry."

9 Elements of Criticism.

primitive sense; or to the various natural associations founded on the physical and moral concomitants of great Altitude *. It is surely a problem of some curiosity to ascertain, what led the Greeks to employ the word ΥΨΟΣ in this metaphorical acceptation; and what has determined the moderns to adopt so universally the same figure, and to give to its meaning a still greater degree of latitude. No other term can be found in our language which conveys precisely the same notion; and to this notion it is now so exclusively appropriated, that its literal import is seldom thought of. To use the word *sublimity*, in prose composition, as synonymous with *altitude* or *height*, would be affectation and pedantry.

Among the critics hitherto mentioned, Lord Kames alone has observed, that, "generally speaking, the figurative sense "of a word is derived from its proper sense;" and that "this "holds remarkably with respect to Sublimity." But of this observation, so just and important in itself, he has made little or no use in the sequel; nor has he once touched on the most interesting and difficult point in the problem,—the *grounds* of that natural transition which the mind is disposed to make from Sublimity, literally so called, to the numerous metaphori-

* As for the etymology of Sublime (*sublimis*) I leave it willingly to the conjectures of lexicographers. The common one which we meet with in our Latin dictionaries (q. supra limum) is altogether unworthy of notice.

cal uses of the term. To assert that, in all these cases, *an emotion somewhat similar is experienced**, is at best but a vague and unsatisfactory solution of the difficulty.

Before I proceed farther, it is proper for me to observe, that my aim is not to substitute a new theory of my own, instead of those offered by my predecessors; but only to account, from the general laws of human thought, for the various metaphorical or *transitive* meanings of the word Sublimity. If I shall be successful in this attempt, I may, perhaps, be able to throw some light on the circumstances, by which such a variety of hypotheses, so widely different from each other, have been suggested by the same pheno-

* "An increasing series of numbers, *producing an emotion similar to that of* "*mounting upward*, is commonly termed an *ascending series:* a series of numbers "gradually decreasing, *producing an emotion similar to that of going downward*, is "commonly termed a descending series.——The veneration we have for our ances- "tors, and for the ancients in general, *being similar to the emotion produced by an* "*elevated object of sight*, justifies the figurative expression, of the ancients being "*raised* above us, or possessing a *superior* place.——The notes of the gamut, pro- "ceeding regularly from the blunter or grosser sounds, to the more acute and pier- "cing, *produce in the hearer a feeling somewhat similar to what is produced by* "*mounting upward;* and this gives occasion to the figurative expressions, *a high* "*note*, and a *low note*."——Elements of Criticism.

I need scarcely remark, that, in these various instances, the real difficulty, so far from being explained, is not even pointed out as an object of curiosity.

mena. My own opinion is, that there is a large mixture of truth in most of these theories; but that all of them have taken their rise from partial views of the subject, or rather from a mistaken view of the nature of the problem to be resolved.

In reflecting on the circumstances by which Sublimity in its primitive sense is specifically distinguished, the first thing that strikes us is, that it carries the thoughts in a direction opposite to that in which the great and universal law of terrestrial gravitation operates. Hence it is, that while motion *downwards* conveys the idea only of a passive obedience to the laws of nature, motion *upwards* always produces, more or less, a feeling of pleasing surprise, from the comparative rarity of the phenomenon. In the ascent of flame; of sparks of fire; of rockets; nay, even of a column of smoke, there is something amusing and fascinating to the eye;—trifling, however, in the effect produced on the imagination, when compared with the flight of an eagle soaring towards the sun. The fact is, that the ascent of an animated being into the upper regions, while it attracts the attention, in common with the ascent of smoke or of flame, exhibits *active powers* which are completely denied to ourselves, not only in degree, but in kind: and accordingly, when we wish to convey the idea of a supernatural agent, the most obvious image which presents itself, is that of the human form invested with wings;

*pennis non homini datis.* The same image has been employed for this purpose, in all ages and in all countries; and must therefore have been suggested by the common nature and common circumstances of the human race *.

An image perfectly analogous to this has universally occurred as an expressive type of those mental endowments which are confined to a few favoured individuals. It is thus we speak of *the flights* of imagination and of fancy; both of which powers are commonly supposed to be the immediate gift of heaven; and not, like our scientific habits and acquirements, the result of education or of study.

Among the sciences, Astronomy is that to which the epithet Sublime is applied with the most appropriate precision; and *this* evidently from the Elevation of the objects with which it is conversant: "*Aërias tentasse domos, animoque rotundum* "*Percurrisse polum.*"—We do not, however, speak of the *flights* of the astronomer, as we do of those of the poet; because the proceedings of experience and of reason are slow in comparison of those of imagination. Ovid has happily marked this circumstance by the word *scandere*, in the following verses, which I quote chiefly on account of the additional proof they afford of the intimate association between the

* See Note (Z).

conception of mere *height* or *superiority*, and of that metaphorical *sublimity* which falls under the cognizance of critical and of ethical inquirers.

" Felices animos, quibus hæc cognoscere primis
" Inque domos superas *scandere* cura fuit!
" Credibile est illos pariter vitiisque locisque
" Altiùs humanis exseruisse caput.
" Non Venus et Vinum SUBLIMIA pectora fregit,
" Officiumve fori, militiæve labor,
" Nec levis ambitio, perfusaque gloria fuco,
" Magnarumve fames sollicitavit opum.
" Admovere oculis distantia sidera nostris,
" Ætheraque ingenio supposuere suo.
" Sic petitur cœlum."—

Eminent moral qualities too, particularly those of the more rare and heroical kind, are frequently characterized by the same language.

——" *Pauci* quos æquus amavit
" Jupiter, aut ardens evexit ad æthera virtus,
" Dès geniti, potuere."—

" Virtus, recludens immeritis mori
" Cœlum, negata tentat iter via:
" Cœtusque vulgares et udam
" Spernit humum fugiente penna."

The more sober imagination of philosophical moralists has, in general, disposed them to content themselves with likening the discipline of a virtuous life to a toilsome ascent up a

rugged steep, growing less and less difficult at every step that we gain. In this, as in the allusions just quoted from the poets, the radical idea is, a continued course of active exertion, in opposition to the downward tendency of terrestrial gravitation *.

To the more eminent and distinguishing attainments, accordingly, of the virtuous man, some modern writers have given the title of the *moral sublime;* a metaphorical phrase, to which another natural association, afterwards to be mentioned, lends much additional propriety and force.

Three other very conspicuous peculiarities distinguish Sublimity from Depth, and also from horizontal Distance. 1. The vertical line in which Vegetables shoot: 2. The erect form of Man, surmounted with the seat of intelligence, and with the elevated aspect of the *human face divine:* 3. The upward growth of the Human Body, during that period when the intellectual and moral progress of the mind is advancing with the greatest rapidity:—All of them presenting the most impressive images of an aspiring ambition, or of a tendency to *rise higher;* in opposition to that law of *gravity* which, of all physical facts, is the most familiar to our senses.

* See Note (A a).

With these three circumstances, there is a fourth which conspires, in no inconsiderable degree, in imparting an allegorical or typical character to literal *sublimity*. I allude to the Rising, Culminating, and Setting of the heavenly bodies;—more particularly, to the Rising, Culminating, and Setting of the Sun; accompanied with a corresponding increase and decrease in the heat and splendour of his rays. It is impossible to enumerate all the various analogies which these familiar appearances suggest to the fancy. I shall only mention their obvious analogy to the Morning, Noon, and Evening of life; and to the short interval of Meridian Glory, which, after a gradual advance to the summit, has so often presaged the approaching decline of human greatness.

It is not, however, to be imagined, because Height is a source of Sublime emotion, that Depth must necessarily affect the mind with feelings of an opposite description. Abstracting altogether from the state of the fact, which is decisive against such a supposition, we should not be entitled to draw this conclusion from any of the theoretical considerations hitherto stated. For although, in most cases, motion downwards conveys the idea of a passive obedience to physical laws, it frequently implies active powers exactly the same with those which are displayed in the ascent of animated beings. Instances of this occur in the equable and regulated descent of a bird, when about to alight on the ground; and,

(what is still more to our purpose) in the stooping flight of a hawk or of an eagle, darting upon its quarry;—a motion which is sometimes suddenly arrested in its accelerating career, and instantly succeeded by a retreat into the clouds.

It is to be remembered, besides, that, in the descent of bodies from a great height, their previous ascent is implied; and accordingly, the active power by which their elevation was effected, is necessarily recalled to the imagination, by the *momentum* acquired during the period of their fall *.

The feelings produced by looking downwards from the battlement of a high tower, or from the edge of a precipitous rock, have also had a frequent place in sublime descriptions; and Mr Burke seems to have thought, that they are still more powerful in their effect, than those excited by the idea of great *altitude*. In this opinion I cannot agree with him, if it be understood to imply any thing more than that a *particular* eminence may appear contemptible when viewed from below, while it produces an emotion allied to the sublime, on a spectator who looks down from its summit. Of the possibility of this every person must be satisfied from his own experience; but it is altogether foreign to the ques-

* The same idea (as will afterwards appear more fully) is associated with the metaphorical use of the same language.

"Si cadendum est mihi, cœlo cecidisse velim."

tion, whether Height or Depth *in general,* is capable of producing the strongest impression of Sublimity; a question, the decision of which appears to me to be not more difficult or dubious than that of the former; and which I shall endeavour afterwards to place beyond the reach of controversy, in a subsequent part of this essay.

The feelings, at the same time, of which we are conscious in looking down from an eminence, are extremely curious; and are, in some cases, modified by certain intellectual processes, which it is necessary to attend to, in order to understand completely the principles upon which Depth has occasionally such a share, in adding to the power of sublime emotions.

The first and the most important of these processes is, the strong tendency of the imagination to represent to us, by an ideal change of place, the feelings of those who are *below;* or to recal to us our own feelings, previous to our ascent. This tendency of the imagination we are the more disposed to indulge, as it is from *below* that altitudes are most frequently viewed; and as we are conscious, when we look downwards, of the unusual circumstances in which we are placed. We compare the apparent Depth with the apparent Height, and are astonished to find how much we had under-

rated the latter. It is owing to this, that mountains, when seen from the contiguous plain, produce their sublimest effect on persons accustomed to visit their summits; and that a lofty building, like the dome of St Paul's, acquires ever after tenfold grandeur in our estimation, when we have once measured its height, step by step, and have looked down from it upon the humble abodes of its ordinary spectators.

On the other hand, in looking upwards to a precipice, if one of our fellow-creatures, or even one of the lower animals, should be placed on the brink, the principle of sympathy transports us instantly, in imagination, to the critical spot; exciting in us some degree of the same feelings which we should there have experienced. "On the cliffs above," (says Gray, in the journal of one of his tours) "hung a "few goats; one of them danced and scratched an ear "with its hind foot, in a place where I would not have "stood stock-still, for all beneath the moon." It is by such unexpected incidents as this, that the attention is forcibly roused to the secret workings of thought; but something of the same kind takes place on almost every occasion, when Altitude produces the emotion of Sublimity. In general, whoever examines the play of his imagination, while his eye is employed either in looking up to a lofty eminence, or in looking down from it, will find it continually shifting the

direction of its movements;—"glancing" (as the poet expresses it) "from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven."

Of this mental process we are more peculiarly conscious in reading the descriptions of poetry:—

"On a rock, whose *haughty brow*
"*Frowns* o'er old Conway's foaming flood,
"Robed in the sable garb of woe,
"With haggard eye, the poet stood.
"Loose his beard and hoary hair
"Streamed like a meteor to the troubled air.

Of these lines, the two first present a picture which the imagination naturally views from below: the rest transport us to the immediate neighbourhood of the bard, by the minuteness of the delineation.

As an obvious consequence of this rapidity of thought, it may be worth while here to remark, that the conceptions of the Painter, which are necessarily limited, not only to one momentary glimpse of a passing object, but to one precise and unchangeable point of sight, cannot possibly give expression to those ideal creations, the charm of which depends, in a great degree, on their quick and varied succession; and on the *ubiquity* (if I may be allowed the phrase) of the Poet's eye. No better illustration of this can be produced than the verses just quoted, compared with the repeated attempts

which have been made to represent their subject on canvas. Of the vanity of these attempts it is sufficient to say, that, while the painter has but *one* point of sight, the poet, from the nature of his art, has been enabled, in this instance, to avail himself of *two*, without impairing, in the least, the effect of his description, by this sudden and unobserved shifting of the scenery *.

In consequence of the play of imagination now described, added to the influence of associations formerly remarked, it is easily conceivable in what manner Height and Depth, though precisely opposite to each other in their physical properties,

* I cannot help thinking that Gray, while he professes to convey a different sentiment, has betrayed a secret consciousness of the unrivalled powers which poetry derives from this latitude in the management of her machinery, in his splendid but exaggerated panegyric on the designs with which Mr Bentley decorated one of the editions of his book. The circumstances he has pitched on as characteristical of the genius of that artist, are certainly those in which the prerogatives of poetry are the most incontestible.

" In silent gaze, the tuneful choir among,
" Half pleased, half blushing, let the muse admire,
" While Bentley leads her sister art along,
" And bids the pencil answer to the lyre.

" See, in their course, *each transitory thought,*
" *Fixed by his touch, a lasting essence take;*
" *Each dream, in fancy's airy colouring wrought,*
" *To local symmetry and life awake.*

should so easily accord together in the pictures which imagination forms; and should even, in many cases, be almost identified in the emotions which they produce.

Nor will there appear any thing in this doctrine savouring of paradox, or of an undue spirit of theory, in the judgment of those who recollect, that, although the humour of Swift and of Arbuthnot has accustomed us to state the ΥΨΟΣ and the ΒΑΘΟΣ as standing in direct opposition to each other, yet, according to the phraseology of Longinus, the oldest writer on the subject now extant, the opposite to the *sublime* is not the *profound*, but the *humble*, the *low*, or the *puerile* *. In one very remarkable passage, which has puzzled several of his commentators not a little, ὕψος and βάθος, instead of being stated

* Το δε μειρακιωδες αντικρυ υπεναντιον τοις μεγεθεσι, &c. &c. Sect. 3.

When Pope attempted to introduce the image of *the profound* into poetry, he felt himself reduced to the necessity, instead of representing his dunces as exerting themselves to dive to the bottom of the ocean, to plunge them, one after another, into the dirt of Fleet-ditch :—

"The king of dikes! than whom no sluice of mud
"With deeper sable blots the silver flood."

* * *

"Next Smedley div'd: slow circles dimpled o'er
"The quaking mud, that clos'd and op'd no more."

* * *

"Then Hill essay'd: scarce vanish'd out of sight,
"He buoys up instant, and returns to light:
"He bears no token of the sable streams,
"And mounts aloft among the swans of Thames."

in contrast with each other, seem to be particularized as two things comprehended under some one common *genus*, corresponding to that expressed by the word *altitudo* in Latin. Ἡμιν δ' ε εκεῖνο διαπορητεον εν αρχη, ει εστιν ὑψος τις η βαθος τεχνη. Smith, in his English version, omits the second of these words entirely; acknowledging that he could not make sense of the passage as it now stands; and intimating his own approbation of a conjectural emendation of Dr Tonstal's, who proposed (very absurdly, in my opinion), to substitute παθος for βαθος. Pearce, on the other hand, translates ὑψος η βαθος sublimitas sive *altitudo;* plainly considering the word βαθος as intended by the author, in conjunction with ὑψος, to complete that idea which the Greek language did not enable him to convey more concisely. As Pearce's translation is, in this instance, adopted, without the slightest discussion or explanation, by the very acute and learned Toup, in his edition of Longinus, it may be considered as also sanctioned by the high authority of his name *.

The stress which the authors of *Martinus Scriblerus* have laid upon Sublimity, in the literal sense of the word, together with the ludicrous parallel which they have so happily kept up between the art of *rising*, and the art of *sinking*, has probably had no inconsiderable effect in diverting the graver

* Note (B b).

critics who have since appeared, from an accurate examination of those obvious analogies and natural associations, which can alone explain some of the most perplexing difficulties connected with the object of our present inquiry *.

* "The Sublime of nature is the sky, the sun, moon, stars, &c. The Profound "of nature is gold, pearls, precious stones, and the treasures of the deep, which are "inestimable as unknown. But all that lies between these, as corn, flowers, fruits, "animals, and things for the mere use of man, are of mean price, and so common "as not to be greatly esteemed by the curious."

Art of Sinking in Poetry, chap. vi.

## CHAPTER SECOND.

### GENERALIZATIONS OF THE WORD SUBLIMITY, IN CONSEQUENCE OF THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGIOUS ASSOCIATIONS.

BESIDE the circumstances already mentioned, a variety of others conspire to distinguish Sublimity or Altitude from all the other directions in which space is extended; and which, of consequence, conspire to invite the imagination, on a correspondent variety of occasions, into one common track. The idea of Sublimity which is, in itself, so grateful and so flattering to the mind, becomes thus a common basis of a great multitude of collateral associations; establishing *universally*, wherever men are to be found, an affinity or harmony among the different things presented simultaneously to the thoughts; an affinity, which a man of good taste never

fails to recognize, although he may labour in vain to trace any metaphysical principle of connection. It is in this way I would account for the application of the word Sublimity to most, if not to all the different qualities enumerated by Mr Burke, as its constituent elements; instead of attempting to detect in these qualities some common circumstance, or circumstances, enabling them to produce similar effects. In confirmation of this remark, I shall point out, very briefly, a few of the natural associations attached to the idea of what is physically or literally Sublime, without paying much attention to the order in which I am to arrange them.

It will contribute greatly to assist my readers in following me through this argument, always to bear in mind, that the observations which I am to offer neither imply any dissent, on my part, from the critical decisions of former writers, nor tend to weaken, in the smallest degree, the authority of their precepts, so far as they are founded on a just induction of particulars. A universal association furnishes a basis of practice, as solid and as independent of the caprice of fashion as a metaphysical affinity or relation; and the investigation of the former is a legitimate object of philosophical curiosity no less than the latter. In the present instance, I am disposed to assent to most of the critical conclusions adopted both by Mr Burke and by Mr Price; and were the case,

otherwise, I should be cautious in opposing my own judgment to their's, on questions so foreign to my ordinary pursuits, how freely soever I may have presumed to canvass the opinions which they have proposed on some other points of a more speculative and abstract nature.

Of all the associations attached to the idea of Sublimity, the most impressive are those arising from the tendency which the religious sentiments of men, in every age and country, have had to carry their thoughts *upwards* towards the objects of their worship. To what this tendency is owing, I must not at present stop to inquire. It is sufficient for my purpose, if it be granted, (and this is a fact about which there cannot well be any dispute) that it is the result of circumstances common to all the various conditions of mankind. In some cases, the heavens have been conceived to be the dwelling-place of the gods; in others, the sun, moon, and other heavenly bodies, have themselves been deified; but, in all cases, without exception, men have conceived their fortunes to depend on causes operating from above. Hence those apprehensions which, in all ages, they have been so apt to entertain, of the influence of *the Stars* on human affairs. Hence, too, the astrological meaning of the word *ascendant*, together with its metaphorical application to denote the moral influence which one Mind may acquire over ano-

ther *. The language of scripture is exactly consonant to these natural associations. "If I beheld the Sun when it "shined, or the Moon walking in brightness, and my heart "hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my "hand, this also were an iniquity to be punished by the Judge, "for I should have denied the GOD THAT IS ABOVE."—"I AM THE HIGH AND THE LOFTY ONE, WHO INHABITETH "ETERNITY."—"AS THE HEAVENS ARE HIGH ABOVE THE "EARTH, SO ARE MY THOUGHTS ABOVE YOUR THOUGHTS, "AND MY WAYS ABOVE YOUR WAYS."

How closely the *literal* and the *religious* Sublime were asso-

* In the following line of Ennius, *Jupiter* and the *Starry Sublime* are used as synonymous expressions:

"Aspice *hoc sublime candens*, quem invocant omnes *Jovem*."

It is observed by Sir William Jones, that "the JUPITER or DIESPITER, here mentioned by Ennius, is the Indian God of the visible heavens, called INDRA, or the "*King*, and DIVESPITER, or *Lord of the Sky*; and that most of his epithets in Sanscrit are the same with those of the *Ennian* JOVE.————His weapon is the thunderbolt; he is the regent of winds and showers; and though the East is peculiarly "under his care, yet his *Olympus* is *Meru*, or the North pole, allegorically represented as a mountain of gold and gems."—(Dissertation on the Gods of Greece, Italy, and India.)

The same natural association has evidently suggested the towering forms so common in edifices consecrated to the memory of the dead, or to the ceremonies of religious worship;—the forms, for example, of the pyramid; of the obelisk; of the column; and of the spires appropriated to our churches in this part of the world.

"The village church, among the trees,
"Shall point, with taper spire, to Heaven."—Rogers.

ciated together in the mind of Milton (whose taste seems to have been formed chiefly on the study of the poetical parts of the sacred writings) appears from numberless passages in the Paradise Lost.

> " Now had th' almighty Father from above,
> " From the pure empyrean where he sits,
> " *High throned above all height*, bent down his eye."

In some cases, it may perhaps be doubted, whether Milton has not *forced* on the mind the image of *literal height*, somewhat more strongly than accords perfectly with the overwhelming sublimity which his subject derives from so many other sources. At the same time, who would venture to touch, with a profane hand, the following verses?

> " So even and morn accomplish'd the sixth day.
> " Yet not till the Creator from his work
> " Desisting, though unwearied, *up* returned,
> " *Up* to the heaven of heavens, his *high abode*,
> " Thence to behold this new created world."
> ——————" *Up* he rode
> " Followed with acclamation, and the sound
> " Symphonious of ten thousand harps, that tuned
> " Angelic harmony; the earth, the air,
> " Resounding, (thou rememberest, for thou heardst)
> " The heavens and all the constellations rung,
> " The planets in their stations listening stood,
> " While the bright pomp *ascended jubilant*."

Is it not probable that the impression, produced by this association, strong as it still is, was yet stronger in ancient times? The discovery of the earth's sphericity, and of the general theory of gravitation, has taught us, that the words *above* and *below* have only a relative import. The *natural* association cannot fail to be more or less counteracted in every understanding to which this doctrine is familiarized; and, although it may not be *so far* weakened as to destroy altogether the effect of poetical descriptions proceeding on popular phraseology, the effect must necessarily be very inferior to what it was in ages, when the notions of the wise concerning the local residence of the Gods were precisely the same with those of the vulgar. We may trace their powerful influence on the philosophy of Plato, in some of his Dialogues; and he is deeply indebted to them for that strain of sublimity which characterizes those parts of his writings which have more peculiarly excited the enthusiasm of his followers.

The conclusions of modern science leave the imagination at equal liberty to shoot, in all directions, through the immensity of space; suggesting undoubtedly, to a philosophical mind, the most grand and magnificent of all conceptions; but a conception not nearly so well adapted to the pictures of poetry, as the popular illusion which places heaven exactly over our heads. Of the truth of this last remark no other proof is necessary than the doctrine of the *Antipodes*, which,

when alluded to in poetical description, produces an effect much less akin to the sublime than to the ludicrous.

Hence an obvious account of the connection between the ideas of Sublimity and of Power. The Heavens we conceive to be the abode of *the Almighty;* and when we implore the protection of his omnipotent arm, or express our resignation to his irresistible decrees, by an involuntary movement, we lift our eyes *upwards* *.

As of all the attributes of God, Omnipotence is the most impressive in its effects upon the imagination, so the sublimest of all descriptions are those which turn on the infinite Power manifested in the fabric of the universe;—in the magnitudes, (more especially) the distances, and the velocities of the heavenly bodies; and in the innumerable systems of worlds which he has called into existence. "*Let there be light, and* "*there was light,*" has been quoted as an instance of sublime writing by almost every critic since the time of Longinus; and its sublimity arises partly from the divine brevity with which it expresses the instantaneous effect of the creative

* The same account may be given of the origin of various other natural signs, expressive of religious adoration; (*palmas ad sidera tendens*, &c. &c.) and of some ceremonies which have obtained very generally over the world, particularly that of *offering up* incense.

*fiat*; partly from the *religious sentiment* which it identifies with our conception of the moment, when the earth was first "visited by the day-spring from on high." Milton appears to have felt it in its full force, from the exordium of his hymn:

"Hail, *holy light!* offspring of heaven first-born*."

The sublimity of Lucretius will be found to depend chiefly (even in those passages where he denies the interference of the gods in the government of the world) on the lively images which he indirectly presents to his readers, of the Attributes against which he reasons. In these instances, nothing is more remarkable than the skill with which he counteracts the frigid and anti-poetical spirit of his philosophical system;—the sublimest descriptions of Almighty Power sometimes forming a part of his argument against the Divine Omnipotence. In point of logical consistency, indeed, he thus sacrifices every thing; but such a sacrifice he knew to be essential to his success as a poet.

"Nam (proh sancta Deûm tranquilla pectora pace,
"Quæ placidum degunt ævum, vitamque serenam!)
"Quis regere immensi summam, quis habere profundi
"Indu manu validas potis est moderanter habenas?
"Quis pariter cœlos omneis convertere? et omneis
"Ignibus ætheriis terras suffire feraceis?

* Note (C c).

" Omnibus inque locis esse omni tempore præsto?
" Nubibus ut tenebras faciat cœlique serena
" Concutiat sonitu? tum fulmina mittat, et ædes
" Sæpe suas disturbet, et in deserta recedens
" Sæviat exercens telum, quod sæpe nocenteis
" Præterit, exanimatque indignos, inque merenteis* ?"

The sublime effect of rocks and of cataracts; of huge ridges of mountains; of vast and gloomy forests; of immense and impetuous rivers; of the boundless ocean; and, in general, of every thing which forces on the attention the idea of Creative Power, is owing, in part †, to the irresistible tendency which that idea has to raise the thoughts toward Heaven.—The influence of some of these spectacles, in awakening religious impressions, is nobly exemplified in Gray's ode, written at the *Grande Chartreuse*;—an Alpine scene of the wildest and most awful grandeur, where every thing appears fresh from the hand of Omnipotence, inspiring a sense of the more immediate presence of the Divinity.

" *Præsentiorem et conspicimus Deum*
" Per invias rupes, fera per juga,
" Clivosque præruptos, sonantes
" Inter aquas, nemorumque noctem;
" Quam si repostus sub trabe citreâ
" Fulgeret auro, et Phidiacâ manu."

* Lucret. Lib. 2. 1092.

† I say *in part*, as it will afterwards appear that other circumstances, of a very different sort, conspire to the same end.

The same very simple theory appears to me to afford a satisfactory account of the application of the word *Sublimity* to Eternity, to Immensity *, to Omnipresence, to Omniscience; —in a word, to all the various qualities which enter into our conceptions of the Divine Attributes. As my object, however, in this essay, is not to write a treatise on the Sublime, but merely to suggest slight hints for the consideration of others, I shall content myself with remarking farther, under this head, the influence which the sacred writings must have had, all over the Christian world, in adding solemnity and majesty to these natural combinations. If the effect of *mere elevation* be weakened in a philosophical mind, by the discoveries of modern science, all the adjuncts, physical and moral, which revelation teaches us to connect with the name of the "Most High," have gained an infinite accession of Sublimity.

From the associations thus consecrated in scripture, a plausible explanation might be deduced, of the poetical effect of almost all the qualities which Mr Burke, and other modern critics, have enumerated as constituents of the Sublime; but it is gratifying to the curiosity to push the inquiry farther, by shewing the deep root which the same associations have in the physical and moral nature of the human race; and the tendency which even the superstitious creeds of ancient times had to confirm their authority.

* Note (D d).

In some respects, indeed, these creeds were admirably fitted for the purposes of poetry; in none more than in strengthening that natural association between the ideas of the Sublime and of the Terrible, which Mr Burke has so ingeniously, and I think justly, resolved into the connection between this last idea and that of Power. The region from which Superstition draws all her omens and anticipations of futurity lies over our heads. It is there she observes the aspects of the planets, and the eclipses of the sun and moon; or watches the flight of birds, and the shifting lights about the pole. This, too, is the region of the most awful and alarming meteorological appearances,—"vapours and clouds and "storms;" and (what is a circumstance of peculiar consequence in this argument) of *thunder*, which has, in all countries, been regarded by the multitude, not only as the immediate effect of supernatural interposition, but as an expression of displeasure from above. It is accordingly from this very phenomenon (as Mr Burke has remarked) that the word *astonishment*, which expresses the strongest emotion produced by the Sublime, is borrowed.

If the former observations be just, instead of considering, with Mr Burke, Terror as the ruling principle of the *religious sublime*, it would be nearer the truth to say, that the Terrible derives whatever character of Sublimity belongs to it from religious associations. The application of the epithet Su-

blime to *these*, has, I trust, been already sufficiently accounted for.

It may not be improper to add, with respect to the awful phenomenon of thunder, that the intimate combination between its impression on the ear, and those appearances in the heavens which are regarded as its signs or forerunners, must not only co-operate with the circumstances mentioned by Mr Burke, in imparting to Darkness the character of the Terrible, but must strengthen, by a process still more direct, the connection between the ideas of Darkness and of mere Elevation.

> " Fulmina gigni de crassis, altèque putandum est
> " Nubibus extructis : nam cœlo nulla sereno,
> " Nec leviter densis mittuntur nubibus unquam *."

> " Eripiunt subito nubes cœlumque diemque
> " Teucrorum ex oculis; ponto nox incubat atra:
> " Intonuere poli †."

The same direction is naturally given to the fancy, by the Darkness which precedes hurricanes; and also, during an eclipse of the sun, by the *disastrous twilight shed on half the*

* See the rest of this passage, Lucret. Lib. 6.

† Æneid. Lib. 1.

*nations.* Even in common discourse, as well as in poetry, we speak of the *fall* of night, and of the *fall* of evening.

———Ορωρει δ' αρατοθεν νυξ *.
"Down rushed the night."

In general, fancy refers to the visible heavens, the source of Darkness as well as of Light; and accordingly, both of these (as Mr Burke has remarked), have sometimes an important place assigned to them, in sublime descriptions. They both, indeed, accord and harmonize perfectly with this natural group of associations;—abstracting altogether from the powerful aid which they occasionally contribute in strengthening the other impressions connected with the Terrible.

And here, I must beg leave to turn the attention of my readers, for a moment, to the additional effect which these conspiring associations (more particularly those arising from religious impressions) lend to every object which we consider as Sublime, in the literal sense of that word. I before took notice of the sublime flight of the Eagle; but what an accession of poetical sublimity has the Eagle derived from the attributes ascribed to him in ancient mythology, as the sovereign of all the other inhabitants of the air; as the companion and favourite of Jupiter; and as the bearer

* Odyss. Lib. 5. 294.

of his armour in the war against the giants! In that celebrated passage of Pindar, (so nobly imitated by Gray and by Akenside) where he describes the power of music in soothing the angry passions of the gods; the abruptness of the transition from the thunderbolt to the eagle; and the picturesque minuteness of the subsequent lines, sufficiently shew what a rank was occupied by this bird in the warm imagination of Grecian idolatry *.—Of the two English poets, just mentioned, it is observable that the former has made no farther reference to Jupiter, than as carrying "the feathered king on "his scepter'd hand;" but in order to compensate for this omission, he has contrived, in his picture of the eagle's sleep, by the magical charm of figurative language, to suggest, indirectly, the very same sublime image with which the description of Pindar commences:

"Quench'd in *dark clouds* of slumber lie,
"The *terror* of his beak, and *lightning* of his eye †."

* Και τον αιχματὰν κεραυνον σβεινυεις.
Αενάου πυρος. Ευ-
δει ανα σκαπτω Διος αιετος, &c. &c.

† May I be permitted to add, that in Akenside's imitation, as well as in the original, the reader is prepared for the short *episode* of the Eagle, (which in all the three descriptions is unquestionably the most prominent feature) by the previous allusion to the κεραυνον αεναου πυρος;—and to suggest my doubts, whether in Gray, the transition to this picture from *Thracia's Hills* and the *Lord of War*, be not a little too violent, even for lyric poetry.—The English reader may judge of this, from the verses of Akenside.

After these remarks, it will not appear surprising that the same language should be transferred from the objects of religious worship, to whatever is calculated to excite the analogous, though comparatively weak sentiments of admiration and of wonder. The word *suspicere* (to look up) is only one example out of many which might be mentioned. Cicero has furnished us with instances of its application, both to the religious sentiment, and to the enthusiastic admiration with which we regard some of the objects of taste. "Esse præstantem aliquam æternamque naturam, et eam suspiciendam admirandamque hominum generi, pulchritudo mundi ordoque rerum cœlestium cogit confiteri *." — "Eloquentiam, quam suspicerent omnes, quam admirarentur," &c. †. On the latter occasion, as well as on the former, the words *suspicio* and *admiror* are coupled together, in order to convey more forcibly one single idea.

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..... "Those lofty strings
"That charm the mind of gods; that fill the courts
"Of wide Olympus with oblivion sweet
"Of evils, with immortal rest from cares,
"Assuage the terrors of the throne of Jove;
"And quench the formidable thunderbolt
"Of unrelenting fire. With slacken'd wings,
"While now the solemn concert breathes around,
"Incumbent o'er the sceptre of his lord,
"Sleeps the stern eagle; by the number'd notes
"Possess'd, and satiate with the melting tone;
"Sovereign of birds."

* De Divinat. Lib. 2. † Orat. 28.

On this particular view of the sublime, considered in connection with religious impressions, I have only to take notice farther, of a remarkable coincidence between their influence and that of the feelings excited by *literal* Sublimity, in assimilating the poetical effects of the two opposite dimensions of Depth and of Height. In the case of literal Sublimity, I have already endeavoured to account for this assimilation. In that now before us, it seems to be the obvious result of those conceptions, so natural to the human mind, which have universally suggested a separation of the invisible world into two distinct regions; the one situated at an immense distance above the earth's surface; the other at a corresponding distance below;—the one a blissful and glorious abode, to which virtue is taught to aspire as its final reward; the other inhabited by beings in a state of punishment and of degradation. The powers to whom the infliction of this punishment is committed, cannot fail to be invested by the fancy as the ministers and executioners of divine justice, with some of the attributes which are characteristical of the Sublime; and this association it seems to have been a great object of the heathen mythology to strengthen, as much as possible, by the fabulous accounts of the alliances between the celestial and the infernal deities; and by other fictions of a similar tendency. Pluto was the son of Saturn, and the brother of Jupiter; Proserpine, the daughter of Jupiter

and of Ceres; and even the river Styx was consecrated into a divinity, held in veneration and dread by all the Gods.

The language of the inspired writings is, on this as on other occasions, beautifully accommodated to the irresistible impressions of nature; availing itself of such popular and familiar words as *upwards* and *downwards*, *above* and *below*, in condescension to the frailty of the human mind, governed so much by sense and imagination, and so little by the abstractions of philosophy. Hence the expression of *fallen* Angels, which, by recalling to us the eminence from which they fell, communicates, in a single word, a character of Sublimity to the bottomless abyss: "How art thou fallen from "heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!" The Supreme Being is himself represented as filling *hell* with his presence; while the throne where he manifests his glory is conceived to be placed *on high*: "If I ascend into heaven, thou art "there; if I make my bed in hell, thou art there also."

To these associations, Darkness, Power, Terror, Eternity, and various other adjuncts of Sublimity, lend their aid in a manner too palpable to admit of any comment.

## CHAPTER THIRD.

GENERALIZATIONS OF SUBLIMITY IN CONSEQUENCE OF ASSOCIATIONS RESULTING FROM THE PHENOMENA OF GRAVITATION, AND FROM THE OTHER PHYSICAL ARRANGEMENTS WITH WHICH OUR SENSES ARE CONVERSANT.

WHEN we confine our views to the earth's surface, a variety of additional causes conspire, with those already suggested, to strengthen the association between Elevated Position and the ideas of Power, or of the Terrible. I shall only mention the security it affords against a hostile attack, and the advantage it yields in the use of missile weapons; two circumstances which give an expressive propriety to the epithet *commanding*, as employed in the language of Fortification.

In other cases, elevated objects excite emotions still more closely allied to admiration and to awe, in consequence of our experience of the effect of heavy bodies falling downwards from a great height. Masses of water, in the form of

a mountain-torrent, or of a cataract, present to us one of the most impressive images of irresistible impetuosity which terrestrial phenomena afford; and accordingly have an effect, both on the eye and on the ear, of peculiar Sublimity, of which poets and orators have often availed themselves to typify the overwhelming powers of their respective arts.

" Monte decurrens velut amnis, imbres
" Quem super notas aluere ripas,
" Fervet, immensusque ruit profundo
" Pindarus ore."

" Now the rich stream of music winds along,
" Deep, majestic, smooth, and strong;
" Through verdant vales, and Ceres' golden reign;
" Now rolling down the steep amain,
" Headlong impetuous see it pour,
" The rocks and nodding groves re-bellow to the roar."

" At ille" (says Quinctilian, speaking of the different kinds of eloquence) " qui saxa devolvat, et pontem indigne-
" tur, et ripas sibi faciat, multus et torrens, judicem vel ni-
" tentem contra feret, cogetque ire quâ rapit *."

The tendency of these circumstances, in conjunction with others before mentioned, to associate a sublime effect with

* Quinct. L. 12, c. x.

*motion downwards*, is too obvious to require any illustration; and accordingly, it opens a rich field of allusion to poets, wherever an idea is to be conveyed of mighty force and power; or where emotions are to be produced, allied to terror. *Motion upwards*, on the other hand, and perhaps still more, whatever is able to oppose an adequate resistance to a superincumbent weight, or to a descending shock, furnishes, for reasons hereafter to be explained, the most appropriate images subservient to that modification of the Sublime, which arises from a strong expression of mental energy.

In looking up to the vaulted roof of a Gothic Cathedral, our feelings differ, in one remarkable circumstance, from those excited by torrents and cataracts; that whereas, in the latter instances, we see the *momentum* of falling masses actually exhibited to our senses; in the former, we see the triumph of human art, in rendering the law of gravitation subservient to the suspension of its own ordinary effects:

> ——— "The ponderous roof,
> "By its own weight made stedfast and immoveable."

An emotion of Wonder, accordingly, is here added to that resulting from the Sublimity of Loftiness and of Power.—As we are placed too, immediately *under* the incumbent mass, the idea of the Terrible is brought home to the imagination more

directly; and would, in fact, totally overpower our faculties with the expectation of our inevitable and instant destruction, were it not for the experimental proof we have had of the stability of similar edifices. It is this natural apprehension of impending danger, checked and corrected every moment by a rational conviction of our security, which seems to produce that silent and pleasing awe which we experience on entering within their walls; and which so perfectly accords with the other associations awakened by the sanctity of the place, and with the sublimity of the Being in whom they are centered *.

The effect of the habits of thought and of feeling which

* An emotion of *wonder*, analogous to that excited by the vaulted roof of a cathedral, enters deeply into the pleasing effect produced by a majestic arch thrown across a river or a gulf. That it does not depend merely on the beauty of form, or upon vastness of dimension, appears clearly from the comparative meanness of an iron bridge, though executed on a far greater scale. I was never more disappointed in my life than when I first saw the bridge at Sunderland.

In the following rude lines of Churchill, which Mr Tooke's letter to Junius has made familiar to every ear, the feelings which give to the *stone arch* its peculiar character of grandeur are painted with equal justness and spirit:

——— "'Tis the last key-stone
"That makes the arch: the rest that there were put,
"Are nothing till that comes to bind and shut.
"Then stands it a triumphal mark: then men
"Observe the strength, the height, the why and when
"It was erected; and still, walking under,
"Elect some new matter to look up and wonder."

have been just described, give not only a propriety but a beauty to epithets expressive of the Terrible, even when applied to the great elevation of things from which no danger can, for a moment, be conceived to be possible.

"—Where not a precipice *frowns* o'er the heath
"To rouse a noble *horror* in the soul."

"Mark how the *dread* pantheon stands
"Amid the domes of modern hands:
"Amid the toys of idle state,
"How simply, how severely great!"

To all this it may be added, that the *momentum* of falling bodies is one of the most obvious resources of which Man avails himself for increasing his physical power, in the infancy of the mechanical arts. Even in the hostile exertions made with the rudest weapons of offence, such as the club and the mace, power is always employed *from above*; and the same circumstance of *superiority*, in the literal sense of that word, is considered as the most decisive mark of victory in still closer conflict. The idea of Power, accordingly, comes naturally to be associated with the quarter from which it can alone be exerted in the most advantageous and effectual manner; and that of weakness with prostration, inferiority and submission.

When these different considerations are combined, it will not appear surprising, that the ideas of Power and of High Station, should, in their application to our own species, be almost identified; insomuch that, in using this last expression, we are scarcely conscious of speaking metaphorically. A similar remark may be extended to the following phrases; High rank—High birth—High-spirited—High-minded; High-Priest—High-Churchman—Serene Highness—High and Mighty Prince. The epithet Sublime, when applied to the Ottoman Court, affords another example of the same association. Sir William Temple's comparison of the subordination and gradations of ranks in a mixed monarchy to a Pyramid; and Mr Burke's celebrated allusion to the "Corinthian Capitals of Society," are but expansions and illustrations of this proverbial and unsuspected figure of speech.

The same considerations appear to me to throw a satisfactory light on that intimate connection between the ideas of Sublimity and of Energy which Mr Knight has fixed on as the fundamental principle of his theory. The *direction* in which the energies of the human mind are conceived to be exerted, will, of course, be in opposition to that of the *powers* to which it is subjected; of the *dangers* which hang over it; of the *obstacles* which it has to surmount in rising to distinction. Hence the metaphorical expressions of an *unbending* spirit; of *bearing up* against the pressure of misfortune; of an *aspir-*

*ing* or *towering* ambition, and innumerable others. Hence, too, an additional association, strengthening wonderfully the analogy, already mentioned, between Sublimity and certain Moral qualities; qualities which, on examination, will be found to be chiefly those recommended in the Stoical School; implying a more than ordinary *energy* of mind, or of what the French call Force of Character. In truth, Energy, as contra-distinguished from Power, is but a more particular and modified conception of the same idea; comprehending the cases where its sensible effects do not attract observation; but where its silent operation is measured by the opposition it resists, or by the weight it sustains. The brave man, accordingly, was considered by the Stoics as partaking of the sublimity of that Almighty Being who puts him to the trial; and whom they conceived as witnessing, with pleasure, the erect and undaunted attitude in which he awaits the impending storm, or contemplates the ravages which it has spread around him. "Non video quid habeat in terris Jupiter pul-
"chrius, quam ut spectet Catonem, jam partibus non semel
"fractis, *stantem nihilominus inter ruinas publicas rectum.*"

It is this image of mental energy, bearing up against the terrors of overwhelming Power, which gives so strong a poetical effect to the description of Epicurus, in Lucretius; and also to the character of Satan, as conceived by Milton. But in all these cases, the sublimity of Energy, when care-

fully analyzed, will be found to be merely relative; or, if I may use the expression, to be only a reflection from the sublimity of the Power to which it is opposed *.

It will readily occur as an objection to some of the foregoing conclusions, that *horizontal extent*, as well as great *altitude*, is an element of the Sublime. Upon the slightest reflection, however, it must appear obvious, that this extension of the meaning of Sublimity arises entirely from the natural association between elevated position and a commanding prospect of the earth's surface, in all directions. As the most palpable *measure* of elevation is the extent of view which it affords, so, on the other hand, an enlarged horizon recals impressions connected with great elevation. The plain of Yorkshire, and perhaps still in a greater degree, Salisbury plain, produces an emotion approaching to sublimity on the mind of a Scotchman, the first time he sees it;—an emotion, I am persuaded, very different from what would be experienced, on the same occasion, by a Fleming or a Dutchman; and *this*, abstracting altogether from the charm of novelty.

* The pleasure we feel in the consciousness of Energy is but a particular case of that arising from the consciousness of Power.

With respect to the pleasure connected with the consciousness of Power, See some remarks in a small volume, entitled "Outlines of Moral Philosophy," by the author of this work.

The feelings connected with the wide expanse over which his eye was accustomed to wander from the summits of his native mountains, and which, in hilly countries, are to be enjoyed exclusively, during the short intervals of a serene sky, from eminences which, in general, are lost among the clouds,—these feelings are, in some measure, awakened by that enlarged horizon which now everywhere surrounds him; the principle of Association, in this, as in numberless other cases, transferring whatever emotion is necessarily connected with a particular idea, to every thing else which is inseparably linked with it in the memory.

This natural association between the ideas of Elevation and of Horizontal Extent is confirmed and enlivened by another, arising also from the physical laws of our perceptions. It is a curious, and at the same time a well known fact, that, in proportion as elevation or any other circumstance widens our horizon, the enlargement of our horizon adds to the apparent height of the vault above us. It was long ago remarked by Dr Smith of Cambridge, that "the "known distance of the terrestrial objects which terminate "our view, makes that part of the sky which is towards the "horizon, appear more distant than that which is towards "the zenith; so that the apparent figure of the sky is not "that of a hemisphere, but of a smaller segment of a sphere." To this remark a later writer has added, that "when the vi-

" sible horizon is terminated by very distant objects, the ce-
" lestial vault seems to be enlarged in all its dimensions."—
" When I view it" (he observes) " from a confined street or
" lane, it bears some proportion to the buildings that sur-
" round me; but when I view it from a large plain, termi-
" nated on all hands by hills which rise one above another,
" to the distance of twenty miles from the eye, methinks I
" see a new heaven, whose magnificence declares the great-
" ness of its author, and puts every human edifice out of
" countenance; for now, the lofty spires and the gorgeous
" palaces shrink into nothing before it, and bear no more
" proportion to the celestial dome, than their makers bear
" to its maker *."—Let the same experiment be tried from the summit of a lofty mountain, commanding an immense prospect all around of land and of sea; and the effect will be found to be magnified on a scale beyond description.

To those who have verified this optical phenomenon by their own observation, it will not appear surprising, that the word Sublimity should have been transferred from the vertical line, not only to the horizontal surface, but also to the immense concavity of the visible hemisphere. As these various modifications of space are presented to the eye at the same moment, each heightening the effect of the others, it

* Reid's Inquiry, chap. vi. sect. 22.

is easily conceivable, that the same epithet should be insensibly applied to them in common; and that this common epithet should be borrowed from that dimension on which so much of the general result primarily depends *.

Another extension of the word Sublimity seems to be in part explicable on the same principle; I mean the application we occasionally make of it to the emotion produced by looking *downwards*. For this latitude of expression I already endeavoured to account from other considerations; but the solution will appear still more satisfactory, when it is recollected, that, along with that apparent enlargement of the celestial vault, which we enjoy from a high mountain, there is an additional perception, which comes home still more directly to our personal feelings, that of the space by which we are separated from the plain below. With this perception a feeling of Awe (arising partly from the giddy eminence on which we stand, and partly from the solitude and remoteness of our situation) is, in many cases, combined; a feeling which cannot fail to be powerfully instrumental in binding the association between *depth*, and the other elements which swell the complicated emotion excited by the rare incident of an Alpine prospect.

> "What dreadful pleasure there to stand sublime,
> "*Like shipwreck'd mariner on desert coast,*

* Note (Ee).

" And view th' enormous waste of vapours toss'd
" In billows length'ning to th' horizon round;
" Now scoop'd in gulphs, in mountains now emboss'd *."

With respect to the concavity over our heads, (and of which, how far soever we may travel on the earth's surface, the summit or cope is always exactly coincident with our shifting zenith) it is farther observable, that its sublime effect is much increased by the mathematical regularity of its form; suggesting the image of a vast *Rotundo*, having its centre every where, and its circumference no where;" a circumstance which forces irresistibly on the mind, the idea of something analogous to architectural design, carried into execution by Omnipotence itself. This idea is very strongly stated in the passage which was last quoted; and it is obviously implied in the familiar transference of the words Vault and Dome, from the edifices of the builder to the divine handywork.—" *This majestical roof*, fretted with golden " fires,"—an expression which Shakespeare applies to the firmament, has been suggested by the same analogy.

As the natural bias of the imagination, besides, is to conceive the firmament to be something *solid*, in which the sun,

* Accordingly, we find the poets frequently employing words synonymous with Height and Depth, as if they were nearly convertible terms: " Blue Profound."—(Akenside).—" Rode Sublime, The secrets of th' Abyss to spy."—(Gray). " Cælum Profundum."—(Virgil.) The phrase Profunda Altitudo is used, even by prose writers. An example of it occurs in Livy; 38. 23.

moon, and stars, are mechanically fixed, a sentiment of Wonder at the unknown means by which the law of gravity is, in this instance, counteracted, comes to be superadded to the emotion excited by the former combination of circumstances. This sentiment is very frequently expressed by children; and the feelings of childhood have often an influence of which we are little aware (more especially in matters of Taste) on those which are experienced in the maturity of our judgment *.

The sublime effect of the celestial vault is still farther heightened by the vast and varied space which the eye has to travel over in rising gradually from the horizon to the zenith:—contemplating, at one time, the permanent glories of the starry expanse; at another, enjoying the magical illusion with which, from sunrise till sunset, the clouds diversify the sky. To this immediate impression produced upon the senses, must be added the play given to the imagination, in supplying the remainder of that grand spectacle under which we are placed, and of which the sight can take in only, at one and the same moment, a limited portion. As the smallest arch of a circle enables us to complete the whole circumference, so the slightest glance of the heavens presents to our conceptions the entire hemisphere; inviting the thoughts to grasp, at once, what the laws

* "Aspice convexo nutantem pondere mundum."

Virg. Bucol. iv. l. 50.

of vision render it impossible for us to perceive, but in slow succession. The ingenious and well-known remark which Mr Burke has made on the pleasure we receive from viewing a Cylinder, appears to me to hold, with much greater exactness, when applied to the effect of a Spacious Dome on a spectator placed under its concavity.

In all such cases, however, as have been now under our consideration, notwithstanding the variety of circumstances by which the effect is augmented or modified, I am inclined to think, that Sublimity, literally so called, will be found, in one way or another, the predominant element or ingredient. In the description, for example, which Mr Brydone has given of the boundless prospect from the top of Ætna, the effect is not a little increased by the astonishing elevation of the spot from whence we conceive it to have been enjoyed; and it is increased in a degree incomparably greater, by the happy skill with which he has divided our attention between the spectacle *below*, and the spectacle *above*.—Even in the survey of the upper regions, it will be acknowledged by those who reflect carefully on their own experience, that the eye never rests till it reaches the zenith; a point to which numberless accessary associations, both physical and moral, unite in lending their attractions.

After the remarks which have been already made on the

natural association between the ideas of elevation, and of horizontal amplitude in general, it may, at first sight, appear superfluous to say any thing farther with respect to the Sublimity which is universally ascribed to the Ocean, even when its waves are still. In this particular case, however, the effect is so peculiarly strong, that it may be fairly presumed, other collateral causes conspire with those which have been hitherto mentioned; and accordingly, a variety of specific circumstances instantly occur, as distinguishing the surface of a smooth sea from all the other instances in which the epithet Sublime is applied to what is perfectly flat or level.

1. Of these circumstances one of the most prominent is the *unfathomable depth* of the ocean; or, in other words, the *immeasurable elevation* above its bottom, of those who navigate upon its surface. Agreeably to this idea, mariners are described in Scripture, as those "who see the wonders of the "great deep;" and the same language is employed by Gray, to exalt our conceptions even of the sublime flight of the eagle.

——— "Sailing with supreme dominion
"Thro' the azure *deeps* of air,"

2. The *sympathetic dread* associated with the perilous fortunes of those who trust themselves to that inconstant and treacherous element. It is owing to this, that in its most

placid form, its temporary effect in soothing or composing the spirits is blended with feelings somewhat analogous to what are excited by the sleep of a lion; the calmness of its surface pleasing chiefly, from the contrast it exhibits to the terrors which it naturally inspires *.

3. The idea of *literal sublimity* inseparably combined with that of the sea, from the stupendous spectacle it exhibits when agitated by a storm. The proverbial phrase of *mountain billows* sufficiently illustrates the force and the universality of this combination. *A tempestuous sea of mountains* is accordingly an expression applied by an ingenious writer, to the prospect which is seen in one direction from the top of *Skiddaw*; and it would not be easy, in the same number of words, to convey a juster conception of what he wished to describe. To those who have actually navigated the deep, at a distance from every visible coast, the same combination of ideas must present itself, even when the surface of the water is perfectly tranquil. Homer has accurately seized this natural impression of the fancy:

* Gray had manifestly this analogy in his view, when he wrote the following lines:—

"Unmindful of the sweeping whirlwind's sway
"That hush'd in grim repose expects its evening prey."

"Αλλ' ὁτε δὴ τὴν νησον ἐλειπομεν, οὐδέ τις ἄλλη
"Φαίνετο γαιαων, ἀλλ' ὐρανος, ηδὲ θαλασσα *".

Odyss. Lib. 12. l. 403.

4. The complete dependence of the state of the ocean on that of the atmosphere; and the association, or rather identification, of *winds and waves* in the common images of danger which they both suggest.

In the descriptions of shipwrecks, which occur in the ancient poets, the sublimity will be found to result in no inconsiderable degree from this identification; and indeed, in this, as in many other instances, the language of mythology is little more than a personification of the natural workings of the mind.

"Ὡς εἰπων, συνάγεν νεφελας, ἐταραξε δὲ πόντον,
"Χερσι τριαιναν ἑλων, πασας δ' ὀρόθυνεν ἀελλας *
"Παντοιων ἀνεμων. συν δὲ νεφεσσι καλυψε
"Γαιαν ὁμου καὶ πόντον. ὀρωρει δ' ὐράνοθεν νυξ †."

Odyss. Lib. 5. l. 290.

* "Past sight of shore, along the surge we bound;
"And all above is sky, and ocean all around."

† "He spoke, and high the forky trident hurl'd
"Rolls clouds on clouds, and stirs the watery world,
"At once the face of earth and sea deforms,
"Swells all the winds, and rouses all the storms."

" Αλλοτε μεν τε Νοτος Βορεην προβαλεσκε φερεσθαι,
" Αλλοτε δ' αυτ' Ευρος Ζεφυρω ειξασκε διωκειν*."

Odyss. Lib. 5. l. 331.

5. The aid which the art of navigation, in all the stages of its progress, derives from the observation of *the stars*; and the consequent bias given to the fancy, to mount from the ocean to *the heavens*. A pilot seated at the helm, with his eye fixed on the Pole, while the rest of the crew abandon themselves to sleep, forms an interesting picture in some of the noblest productions of human genius. In the Odyssey, this astronomical association is employed with wonderful success by the genius of Homer, to impart a character of Sublimity, even to the little raft of Ulysses, during his solitary voyage from Calypso's island.

" Αυταρ ὁ πηδαλιω ιθυνετο τεχνηεντως,
" Ημενος. ουδε οἱ ὑπνος επι βλεφαροισιν επιπτε,
" Πληιαδας τ' εσορωντι, καὶ οψε δυοντα Βοωτην,
" Αρκτον θ', ἡν καὶ ἁμαξαν επικλησιν καλεουσιν,
" Ἡ τ' αυτου στρεφεται, καὶ τ' Ωριωνα δοκευει.
" Οἰη δ' αμμορος εστι λοετρων Ωκεανοιο †."

Odyss. Lib. 5. l. 270.

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" And now the south, and now the north prevails,
" Now o'er the ocean sweep the eastern gales,
" And now the west-winds rend the fluttering sails."
" Plac'd at the helm he sate, and mark'd the skies,
" Nor clos'd in sleep, his ever-watchful eyes.
" There view'd the Pleiads, and the Northern Team,
" And great Orion's more refulgent beam,

Agreeably to the same bias of the fancy, the principal constellations in our astronomical sphere have been supposed, with no inconsiderable probability, to be emblematical of circumstances and events connected with the oldest voyage alluded to in profane history, the expedition of the Argonauts.—What an accession of strength must have been added, in every *philosophical* mind, to this natural association, in consequence of the methods practised by the moderns for finding the latitude and the longitude! On the other hand, it must be acknowledged, that the *poetical* effect, must, to a certain degree, have been weakened by the discovery of the polarity of the needle.

In minds which have been impressed, in early life, with the fabulous and popular accounts of the origin of astronomy, the same association of literal sublimity with the objects of that study, imparts somewhat of the same character, even to the plains and to the shepherds of ancient Chaldea *.

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"To which, around the axle of the sky
"The Bear, revolving, points his golden eye;
"Who shines exalted on th' etherial plain,
"Nor bathes his blazing forehead in the main."

* Principio Assyrii, *propter planitiem magnitudinemque regionum quas incolebant, cum cœlum ex omni parte patens atque apertum intuerentur*, trajectiones motusque stellarum observaverunt.—Quâ in natione, Chaldæi, diuturna observatione siderum scientiam putantur effecisse, &c. &c.—Cic. de Divinat.

6. The variety of modes in which the ocean presents to us the idea of *power*. Among these, there are *two* which more particularly deserve attention. (1.) Its tendency to raise our thoughts to that Being whose "hand heaves its "billows;" and who "has given his decree to the seas, that "they might not pass his commandment." (2.) Its effect in recalling to us the proudest triumph of Man, in accomplishing the task assigned to him, of subduing the earth and the elements.—Beside, however, these associations, which are common to the inhabitants of all maritime countries, a prospect of the sea must frequently awaken, in every native of this island, many sublime recollections which belong exclusively to ourselves; those recollections, above all others, which turn on the naval commerce, the naval power, and the naval glory of England; and on the numerous and triumphant fleets which "bear the British thunder o'er the world *."

7. The easy transition by which a moralizing fancy passes from a prospect of the sea, to subjects allied to the most interesting of all the various classes of our sublime emotions;—from the ceaseless succession of waves which break on the beach, to the fleeting generations of men; or, from the boundless expanse of the watery waste, to the infinity of Space, and the infinity of Time.

* Thomson.

——————— " Hæres
"Hæredem alterius, velut unda supervenit undam."

" Walk thoughtful on the silent, solemn shore
" Of that vast ocean thou must sail so soon."

In which last lines (as well as in Shakespeare's *bank and shoal of time*), the complete union of the subject and of the simile proves, how intimately they were combined together in the mind of the poet.

Before closing this long discussion concerning the effects produced on the imagination by the connection between the ideas of Altitude and of Horizontal Extent, I think it of great importance to remark farther, in illustration of the same argument, that a similar association attaches itself to these words when employed metaphorically. A good example of this occurs in a passage of the *Novum Organon*, where the author recommends to the students of particular branches of science, to rise occasionally above the level of their habitual pursuits, by gaining the vantage-ground of a higher philosophy. " Prospectationes fiunt a turribus aut locis prælatis; " et impossibile est, ut quis exploret remotiores interioresque " scientiæ alicujus partes, si stet super plano ejusdem scientiæ, " neque altioris scientiæ veluti speculum conscendat:"—An allusion not more logically appropriate, than poetically beautiful; and which probably suggested to Cowley his compa-

rison of Bacon's prophetic anticipations of the future progress of experimental philosophy, to the distant view of the promised land, which Moses enjoyed from the top of Mount Pisgah:

> "Did on the very border stand
> "Of the blest promis'd land;
> "And from the mountain-top of his exalted wit,
> "Saw it himself, and shew'd us it."

The metaphorical phrases of *scala ascensoria et scala descensoria*, which Bacon applies to the Analytical and Synthetical Methods, shew, in a still more explicit manner, the strong impression which the natural association between Altitude and Horizontal extent had made on his imagination; inasmuch as he avails himself of it, as the most significant figure he could employ to illustrate, in the way of analogy, the advantages which he expected to result from his own peculiar mode of philosophizing. Indeed the analogy is so close and so irresistible, that it is scarcely possible to speak of Analysis and Synthesis, without making use of expressions in which it is implied *. When, agreeably to the rules of the former, we rise, or ascend, from particular phenomena to general principles, our views become more enlarged and comprehensive, but less precise and definite with respect to minute details.

* See Note (F f).

In proportion as we re-descend in the way of synthesis, our horizon contracts; but at every step, we find ourselves better enabled to observe and to examine, with accuracy, whatever individual objects attract our curiosity.

In pure Mathematics, it is to the most general and comprehensive methods of inquiry, that we exclusively appropriate the title of the *higher* or *sublimer* parts of the science; a figurative mode of speaking, which is rendered still more appropriate by two collateral circumstances; First, that all these methods, at the time when this epithet was originally applied to them, involved, in one form or another, the idea of Infinity; and, Secondly, that the earliest, as well as the most successful applications of them hitherto made, have been to Physical Astronomy *.

With this exception, and one or two others, for which it is easy to account, it is remarkable, that the epithet universally applied to the more abstruse branches of knowledge is not *sublime* but *profound*. We conceive truth to be something analogous to a Treasure hid under ground; or to the Precious Metals, which are not to be obtained but by digging into the mine; or to Pearls placed at the bottom of the sea, inaccessible to all but such as dive into the deep.—Agreeably to

* Note (G g).

this analogy, we speak of a profound mathematician; a profound metaphysician; a profound lawyer; a profound antiquary *.

The effect of this analogy has probably been not a little strengthened by an idea which (although I believe it to be altogether unfounded) has prevailed very generally in all ages of the world. I allude to the vulgar opinion, that, while poetical genius is the immediate gift of heaven, confined exclusively to a few of its favoured children, the most recondite truths in the most abstruse sciences, are within the reach of all who can submit to the labour of the search. A philosopher of the first eminence has given to this prejudice the sanction of his authority, remarking, that "it is genius, and not the "want of it, that adulterates science, and fills it with error "and false theory;" and that "the treasures of knowledge, al- "though commonly buried *deep*, may be reached by those "drudges who can dig with labour and patience, though they "have not wings to fly †."

* These opposite analogies are curiously combined together in the following sentence of Maclaurin. Speaking of Leibnitz, he remarks:—"We doubt not, that "if a full and perfect account of all that is most *profound* in the *high* geometry "could have been deduced from the doctrine of infinites, it might have been expected "from this author."—(Fluxions, V. 1. p. 45.)

† In this criticism on Dr Reid, I have been anticipated by his learned and ingenious friend Dr Gerard; who, after quoting the above passage, observes, "that the

The justness of this doctrine, I shall take another opportunity to examine at some length. I have referred to it here, merely as an additional circumstance which may have influenced human fancy, in characterizing poetical and philosophical genius by two epithets, which in their *literal* sense express things diametrically opposite.

It is, at the same time, extremely worthy of observation, with respect to the *metaphorical* meaning of both epithets, that as the opposite of the Poetical Sublime is not the Profound, but the Low or the Grovelling; so the opposite of the Philosophical Profound is not what is raised Above the level of the earth, but the Superficial or the Shallow.

" author's modesty under-rates his own abilities; and, in this instance, renders his " decision inaccurate."—Gerard on Genius, pp. 382, 383.

## CHAPTER FOURTH.

CONFIRMATION OF THE FOREGOING THEORY FROM THE NATURAL SIGNS OF SUBLIME EMOTION.—RECIPROCAL INFLUENCE OF THESE SIGNS ON THE ASSOCIATIONS WHICH SUGGEST THEM.

THE strength and power of the associations which have been now under our review, (how trifling and capricious soever some of them may appear to be in their origin) may be distinctly traced in the arts of the Actor and of the Orator, in both of which they frequently give to what may be called metaphorical or figurative applications of Natural Signs, a propriety and force which the severest taste must feel and acknowledge. While the tongue, for example, is employed in pronouncing words expressing elevation of character, the body becomes, by a sort of involuntary impulse, more erect

and elevated than usual; the eye is raised, and assumes a look of superiority or command. Cicero takes notice of the same thing as a natural effect, produced on the Bodily Expression, by the contemplation of the universe; and more particularly, of subjects which are *exalted and celestial*, either in the literal or the metaphorical acceptations of these words. "Est animorum ingeniorumque quoddam quasi pabulum, "consideratio contemplatioque naturæ. Erigimur, *elevatiores* "*fieri videmur*; humana despicimus; cogitantesque supera "atque cœlestia, hæc nostra ut exigua et minima contem-"nimus."

Even in speaking of any thing, whether physical or moral, which invites Imagination upwards, the tones of the voice become naturally higher; while they sink spontaneously to a deep bass, when she follows a contrary direction. This is the more remarkable, that the analogy apprehended between *high* and *low* in the musical scale, and *high* and *low* in their literal acceptations, seems to be the result of circumstances which have not operated universally among our species, in producing the same association of ideas*.

The various associations connected with Sublimity become thus incorporated, as it were, with the Language of Nature; and, in consequence of this incorporation, acquire an incal-

* See Philosophy of the Human Mind, ch. v. part ii. sect. 1.

culable accession of influence over the human frame. We may remark this influence even on the acute and distinguishing judgment of Aristotle, in the admirable description of Μεγαλοψυχια in the third chapter of his Nicomachian Ethics; the whole of which description hinges on an analogy (suggested by a metaphorical word) between Greatness of Stature and Greatness of Mind. The same analogy is the ground-work of the account of Sublimity in Writing, given by Longinus; who, although he speaks only of the effect of sublimity on the Mind, plainly identifies that effect with its Bodily expression. "The Mind" (he observes) "is naturally "*elevated* by the true Sublime, and, assuming a certain proud "and erect attitude, exults and glories, as if it had itself pro- "duced what it has only heard." The description is, I think, perfectly correct; and may be regarded as a demonstrative proof, that, in the complicated effect which *sublimity* produces, the primary idea which has given name to the whole, always retains a decided predominance over the other ingredients.

* * *

It seems to be the expression of Mental Elevation, conveyed by the "*os sublime*" of man, and by what Milton calls *the looks commercing with the skies*, which is the foundation of the Sublimity we ascribe to the Human figure. In point of actual height, it is greatly inferior to various tribes of other animals; but none of these have the whole of their bodies,

both trunk and limbs, in the direction of the *vertical line*; coinciding with that tendency to rise or to mount upwards, which is symbolical of every species of improvement, whether intellectual or moral; and which typifies so forcibly to our species, the pre-eminence of their rank and destination, among the inhabitants of this lower world *.

" When I *look up* to the Heavens which thou hast made" (says an inspired writer); " to the Sun and Stars which thou " hast ordained;

" Then say I, what is man that thou art mindful of him, " or the son of man that thou shouldst visit him!

" For thou hast made him but a *little lower* than the an- " gels; thou hast *crowned his head* with glory and honour.

" Thou hast put all things *under his feet*."

* " Omnis homines qui sese student praestare ceteris animalibus, summa ope niti " decet, vitam silentio ne transeant, veluti pecora, quae natura prona, atque ventri " obedientia, finxit."—Sallust.

" Separat hoc nos
" A grege mutorum, atque ideo venerabile soli
" Sortiti ingenium, divinorumque capaces,
" Atque exercendis capiendisque artibus apti,
" Sensum a cœlesti demissum traximus arce,
" Cujus egent prona et terram spectantia."—
Juvenal. xv. Sat. 142.

Intimately connected with the sublime effect of man's erect form, is the imposing influence of a superiority of stature over the mind of the multitude.—" And when Saul " stood among the people, he was higher than any of them, " from his shoulders and upward.—And all the people " shouted and said, God save the King."

Even in the present state of society, a superiority of stature is naturally accompanied with an air of authority, the imitation of which would be ludicrous in a person not possessed of the same advantages; and, in a popular assembly, every one must have remarked the weight which it adds to the eloquence of a speaker, " proudly eminent above the rest " in shape and gesture *."

From these observations it is easy to explain, how the fancy comes to estimate the intellectual and moral excellencies of individuals, in a way analogous to that in which we measure their stature (I mean by an ideal scale placed in a vertical position); and to employ the words *above, below, superiority, inferiority,* and numberless others, to mark, in these very different cases, their relative advantages and disadvantages †. We have even a bias to carry this analogy farther;

* See Note (II h).

† A trifling, but curious instance, of an analogous association may be remarked in the application we make of the terms High and Low to the Temperature of bodies, in consequence of the vertical position of the scale in our common Thermometers.

and to conceive the various orders of created beings, as forming a *rising scale* of an indefinite Altitude. In this manner we are naturally led to give the title of Sublime to such attainments and efforts, in our own species, as rise above the common pitch of humanity; and hence, the origin of an additional association, conspiring with other circumstances formerly pointed out, as suggesting a metaphorical application of that word to a particular class of the higher beauties of Style.

It appears to me probable, that it was by a vague extension of *this* meaning of the Sublime, to excellence in general, that Longinus was led to bestow this epithet on Sappho's Ode *; and on some other specimens of the Vehement or Impassioned, and also of the Nervous, and of the Elegant, which do not seem to *rise above* the common tone of classical composition in any one quality, but in the finished perfection with which they are executed. I confess, at the same time, my own opinion is, that, with all his great merits as a critic and as an eloquent writer, his use of this word throughout his treatise can neither be accounted for nor rendered consistent by any philosophical theory whatever. In various places, he evidently employs it precisely in the same sense in which it

* Note (I i).

is now generally understood in our language; and in which I have all along used it, in attempting to trace the connection between its different and apparently arbitrary significations *.

It is wonderful that Longinus was not induced, by his own very metaphorical description of the effects of sublime writing, to inquire, in the next place, to what causes it is owing, that sublime emotions have the tendency which he ascribes to them, to *elevate* the thoughts, and to communicate literally a momentary *elevation* to the body. At these effects he has stopped short, without bestowing any attention on what seems to me the most interesting view of the problem.

Mr Burke has adopted the description of Longinus, and has stated the fact with still greater clearness and fulness. If he had followed out his ideas a little further, he would probably have perceived more distinctly than he appears to have done, that the key to some of the chief metaphysical difficulties supposed to be connected with this inquiry, is to be found in the principles which regulate the progressive generalizations of the import of words; and in those laws of

* See Note (K k).

association, which, while they insensibly transfer the arbitrary signs of thought from one subject to another, seldom fail to impart to the latter a power of exciting, in some degree, the same emotions which are the natural or the necessary effects of the former.

## CHAPTER FIFTH.

### INFERENCES FROM THE FOREGOING DOCTRINES, WITH SOME ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

BEFORE I conclude this Essay, it is proper for me to remind my readers, in order to prevent misapprehensions with respect to the foregoing observations, That my aim is not to investigate the principles on which the various elements of Sublimity give pleasure to the mind; but to trace the associations, in consequence of which the common name of Sublimity has been applied to all of them. It is not, for instance, my aim to shew, that the *whole* effect of Horizontal Amplitude arises from its association with Elevation, or Height; far less, that it is this association *alone* which delights us in viewing the celestial vault, with all the various wonders it exhibits by day and by night; but merely to explain, from this principle, the transference of the epithet Su-

blime, from one modification of space to all the others. In like manner, I have abstained altogether from giving any opinion on the very curious question concerning the pleasure arising from certain modifications of Terror; because it did not appear to me to have any immediate connection with the train of my argument. It is sufficient for my purpose, if I have succeeded in accounting for the place which the Terrible, when properly modified, is generally allowed to occupy among the constituents, or at least among the natural adjuncts of the Sublime.

Although I have attempted to shew, at some length, that there is a specific pleasure connected with the simple idea of Sublimity or Elevation, I am far from thinking, that the impressions produced by such adjuncts as Eternity or Power, or even by the physical adjuncts of Horizontal Extent and of Depth, are wholly resolvable into their association with this common and central conception. I own, however, I am of opinion, that, in most cases, the pleasure attached to the conception of *literal sublimity*, identified, as it comes to be, with those religious impressions which are inseparable from the human mind, is one of the chief ingredients in the complicated emotion; and that, in every case, it either palpably or latently contributes to the effect.

From this constant or very general connection, too, which

these different ingredients have with each other, as well as with the central idea of Elevation, they must necessarily both lend and borrow much accessory influence over the mind. The primary effect of Elevation itself cannot fail to be astonishingly increased by its association with such interesting and awful ideas as Immensity, Eternity, Infinite Power, and Infinite Wisdom; blended as they are in our conceptions with that still sublimer attribute of God, which encourages us to look up to him as the Father of All. On the other hand, to all of these attributes, Elevation imparts, in its turn, a common character and a common epithet.

Supposing, therefore, the foregoing conclusions to be admitted as just, a wide field of speculation lies open to future inquirers. To some of these, I flatter myself, the hints which I have suggested may be useful, if not in conducting them into the right path, at least in diverting them from the vain attempt to detect a common quality in the metaphysical essence of things, which derive their common name only from the tie of Habitual Association.

In confirmation of what I have just stated concerning the primary or central idea of Elevation, it may be farther remarked, that when we are anxious to communicate the highest possible character of Sublimity to any thing we are describing, we generally contrive, somehow or other, either di-

rectly, or by means of some strong and obvious association, to introduce the image of the Heavens, or of the Clouds; or, in other words, of Sublimity literally so called. The idea of Eloquence is unquestionably sublime in itself, being a source of the proudest and noblest species of Power which the mind of one man can exercise over those of others: but how wonderfully is its sublimity increased when connected with the image of Thunder; as when we speak of the Thunder of Demosthenes! "Demosthenis non tam vibrarent fulmina, "nisi numeris contorta ferrentur."—Milton has fully availed himself of both these associations, in describing the orators of the Greek republics:

——— "Resistless eloquence
"Wielded at will the fierce democracy;
"Shook th' arsenal, and fulmin'd over Greece,
"To Macedon, and Artaxerxes' throne."

In Collins's ode to Fear, the happy use of a single word identifies at once the Physical with the Moral Sublime, and concentrates the effects of their united force.

"Tho' gentle pity claim her mingled part,
"Yet all the *thunders* of the scene are thine!"

The same word adds not a little to the effect of one of the sublimest descriptions in the book of Job. "Hast thou given

" the horse strength; hast thou clothed his neck with thun-
" der *?"

In the concluding stanza of one of Gray's odes, if the bard, after his apostrophe to Edward, had been represented as falling on his sword, or as drowning himself in a pool at the summit of the rock, the Moral Sublime, so far as it arises from his heroical determination "to conquer and to die," would not have been in the least diminished; but how different from the complicated emotion produced by the images of altitude; of depth; of an impetuous and foaming flood; of darkness; and of eternity; all of which are crowded into the two last lines:

" He spoke—and headlong from the mountain's height
" Deep in the roaring tide he plunged to endless night."

Among the Grecian sages, Plato has been always more peculiarly characterized by the epithet Sublime; and, indeed, on various accounts, it is strongly and happily descriptive of the feelings inspired by the genius of that author; by the lofty mysticism of his philosophy; and even by the remote origin of the theological fables which are said to have descended to him from Orpheus. The following passage

* Note (L l).

paints the impressions of a German scholar *, when he first met with the *Indigitamenta* or Orphic Hymns, during an accidental visit to Leipsic; and the scenery which he has employed to embellish his picture, is worthy of the imagination of Plato himself. The skill with which he has called in to his aid the darkness and silence and awfulness of midnight, may be compared to some of the finest touches of our master-poets; but what I wish, at present, chiefly to remark, is the effect of Altitude and of the Starry Firmament in exalting our conceptions of those religious mysteries of the fabulous ages, which had so powerfully awakened the enthusiasm of the writer.—" Incredibile dictu quo me sacro horrore affla-
" verint indigitamenta ista deorum: nam et tempus ad illorum
" lectionem eligere cogebar, quod vel solum horrorem incu-
" tere animo potest, nocturnum; cum enim totam diem con-
" sumserim in contemplando urbis splendore, et in adeundis,
" quibus scatet urbs illa, viris doctis, sola nox restabat, quam
" Orpheo consecrare potui. In abyssum quendam mysteri-
" orum venerandæ antiquitatis descendere videbar, quoties-
" cunque silente mundo, solis vigilantibus astris et luna,
" μελαγηφάτυς istos hymnos ad manus sumpsi."

* Eschenbach.—I am indebted for this quotation to Dr Akenside's notes subjoined to his Hymn to the Naiads.

It is curious, how very nearly the imagination of Milton, in alluding to the same topics, has pursued the same track:

"Or let my lamp *at midnight hour*
"Be seen in some high lonely tow'r,
"Where I may oft out-watch the Bear,
"With thrice great Hermes, or unsphere
"The spirit of Plato, to unfold
"What worlds, or what vast regions hold
"Th' immortal mind that hath forsook
"Her mansion in this fleshly nook:
"And of those demons that are found
"In fire, air, flood or under ground,
"Whose power hath a true consent
"With planet, or with element*."

If these observations be just, the question which has been so often agitated with respect to the comparative effects of the Physical and Moral Sublime, must appear entirely nugatory; their general result leading to this conclusion, that all the qualities, which we refer to both, unite in forming *one and the same group of associations*. The ideas thus associated, may be conceived to bear some distant analogy, in their mutual communications with each other, and in their common communication with that great fountain of sublime emotion in

* The doctrine of the soul's pre-existence is ascribed by Plato himself to Orpheus.

which they all centre, to the system of circulation in the animal frame;—or, perhaps, *in this point of view*, the associated elements of Sublimity may be still more aptly compared to the different jars composing an Electrical Battery; each of which is prepared to contribute, at one and the same moment, its proportional share to the joint explosion.

In the following well-known illustration of the superiority of the Moral above the Physical Sublime, it is remarkable, that while the author exemplifies the latter only by the magnitude and *momentum* of dead masses, and by the immensity of space considered in general, he not only bestows on the former the interest of a historical painting, exhibiting the majestic and commanding expression of a Roman Form, but lends it the adventitious aid of an allusion, in which the imagination is carried up to Jupiter armed with his bolt. In fact, it is not the two different kinds of sublimity which he has contrasted with each other, but a few of the constituents of the Physical Sublime which he has compared, in point of effect, with the powers both of the Physical and Moral Sublime combined together in their joint operation:

"Look then abroad thro' nature, to the range
"Of planets, suns, and adamantine spheres
"Wheeling unshaken thro' the void immense;
"And speak, O man! does this capacious scene

"With half that kindling majesty dilate
"Thy strong conception, as when Brutus rose
"Refulgent from the stroke of Cæsar's fate,
"Amid the crowd of Patriots, and his arm
"Aloft extending like eternal Jove
"When guilt brings down the thunder, call'd aloud
"On Tully's name, and shook his crimson steel,
"And bade the father of his country, hail!
"For lo! the tyrant prostrate in the dust,
"And Rome again is free."—

I shall close this essay, with hinting very slightly, that how nearly soever allied to Literal Sublimity are all the various kinds of the Metaphorical Sublime, it is by no means an infallible rule, for the attainment of the latter, to soar at once into the clouds; far less, to string together words and images expressive of what is elevated or lofty. I mention this, because it is a common mistake among juvenile writers; and a mistake into which they are not unnaturally betrayed, by the language consecrated to that group of associations which I have been endeavouring to illustrate *. The employment of phrases expressive of mere elevation, and unaccompanied with any display of genius, good sense, or skill, produces one of the most absurd species of the false sublime; that which is properly expressed by the words bombast and fustian. To the faults of this inflated style, Longinus applies

* Dum vitat humum, nubes et inania captat.

the metaphorical title of *meteors* *; a word strongly significant of the impression which they produce on minds, in which the power of taste has not been duly cultivated. In this respect, he seems to have conceived the false Sublime as bearing the same relation to the true, which Pope has so well described, in contrasting false with true Wit:

> "Bright as a blaze, but in a moment gone;—
> "True Wit is everlasting like the Sun."

To avoid all risk of any imputation of this sort, writers of taste find it, in most cases, expedient, in the hackneyed and worn out state of our traditional imagery, when they wish to produce an emotion of Sublimity, to touch on some of its less familiar adjuncts, or on some of the associated ideas which follow in their train; rather than to dwell on the idea of Literal Sublimity, or on any of its more common-place concomitants †. An example of this occurs in Bailly's descrip-

* οὐχ ὑψηλὰ ἀλλὰ μετέωρα.—Sect. 3.

† Among these, thunder and lightning are favourite resources with all writers whose taste inclines them to the *bombast*:

> "Up from Rhyme's poppied vale, and ride the storm
> "That thunders in blank verse."

Such is the exordium of a poem, by an author not destitute of genius (Aaron Hill), who lived in habits of intimacy with Pope, Thomson, and Bolingbroke. On the other hand, in proportion to the difficulty of the task, is the effect produced, when the most obvious adjuncts of sublimity are skilfully and happily presented in new and

tion of an Astronomical Observer, preparing himself to enter on his nightly task, when other mortals are retiring to rest. The elevation of the spectacle above him, which forms the most prominent feature in a passage formerly quoted from Ovid's Fasti, and which undoubtedly contributes more than any thing else to impart a Sublime Character to the Astronomer's situation and employment, is studiously kept out of view, while our attention is drawn to secondary and *less obvious* circumstances, which derive the principal part of their effect from the sublimity of that accompanyment which it is left to fancy to supply;—"to the prospect of a midnight soli-
"tude;—to the silent lapse of time, interrupted only by
"the beats of the Astronomical Clock;—to the motionless
"posture of the Observer, (his eye attached to the Tele-
"scope, his ear intent upon the vibrations of the Pendulum,
"his whole soul rivetted to the fleeting instant which *is never*
"to return);—to the mathematical regularity of the celes-
"tial movements, inviting the Imagination to follow them
"through their Stupendous Cycles;—and to the triumph of
"Human Reason in rendering even the Heavens subservient,

unexpected combinations. Collins furnishes an instance of this in a line quoted above; and Campbell a noble one, in a couplet, descriptive merely of the altitude of a mountain.

"Where Andes, giant of the western star,
"With meteor-standard to the winds unfurl'd,
"Looks from his throne of clouds o'er half the world."

"to complete the dominion of Man over the Earth and "the Ocean."—I have attempted to bring together, from a very imperfect recollection, a few of the principal traits of this noble picture. For the rest I must refer to the very eloquent work from which they are borrowed;—recommending to my readers, if they should have the curiosity to consult the original, to observe (as a farther confirmation of the foregoing speculations) the elevation of style which the author maintains through the whole of his narrative; an elevation naturally inspired by the Sublimity of his subject; and which would have appeared wholly out of place, in tracing the origin and progress of any other branch of physical science, involved to the same degree in the technical mysteries of numbers and of diagrams *.

* Note (M m).

# ESSAY THIRD.

## ON TASTE.

## CHAPTER FIRST.

### GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON OUR ACQUIRED POWERS OF JUDGMENT.—APPLICATION OF THESE TO THE SUBJECT OF THIS ESSAY.

In treating, on a former occasion, of the faculty of Attention, I endeavoured to illustrate those intellectual processes, which, by often passing through the mind, come at length to be carried on with a rapidity that eludes all our efforts to remark it; giving to many of our judgments, which are really the result of thought and reflection, the appearance of instantaneous and intuitive perceptions. The most remarkable instance of such processes which the history of the human un-

derstanding affords, occurs in what are commonly called the *acquired perceptions of sight*; the theory of which has engaged the curiosity of many philosophers since the time of Berkeley, and seems to be now pretty generally understood. The other cases which I allude to, appear to me to be extremely analogous to these acquired perceptions, and to be explicable on the same general principles. The most material difference consists in this, that the acquired perceptions of sight are common to the whole human race; the common necessities of our nature forcing every man to cultivate, from early infancy, the habits by which they are formed; whereas the greater part of our other acquired judgments, being the result of habits connected with particular professions, or pursuits, are peculiar to certain classes of individuals.

Next to the acquired perceptions of sight, may be ranked, in point of rapidity, those processes of thought which pass through the mind, in the familiar operations of reading and of writing. In the former operation, the meaning of what we read seems to be seized at once with the instantaneousness of a perception. In the latter, as the train of our ideas proceeds, we find these ideas recorded upon paper, by an almost spontaneous movement of the hand;—a movement which has no more tendency to distract our attention, than the function of respiration, or the action of the heart. It is the familiarity alone of such phenomena, that prevents the

generality of men from reflecting on them with the wonder which they excite in the mind of the philosopher; and which will be found always to rise higher, in proportion to the accuracy of the analysis to which he subjects them.

But it is not as a subject of wonder only, that these phenomena ought to be regarded. The practical lesson which they suggest is of the highest importance; and is calculated to inspire us with new confidence and vigour, in the cultivation of whatever intellectual habits our situation in life may render it useful for us to possess. Such was the inference which was long ago drawn from them by Polybius, with a spirit of philosophical generalization, which is not often to be met with in ancient historians.

"It would be easy" (says this most judicious writer) "to "shew by instances, that many things which appear, in the "beginning, to be not only difficult but absolutely impracticable, are, in the course of time, and by continued use, "accomplished with the greatest ease. Among numberless instances, the art of reading may be mentioned as "one of the clearest and most convincing proofs of this remark. Take a man who has never learned to read, but "is otherwise a man of sense; set a child before him who "has learned, and order him to read a passage in a book. "It is certain, that this man will scarcely be able to persuade

" himself, that the child, as he reads, must consider distinct-
" ly, First, the form of all the letters; in the Next place,
" their power; and Thirdly, their connection, one with an-
" other. For each of these things requires a certain portion
" of time. When he hears him, therefore, read four or five
" lines together, without any hesitation, and in a breath, he
" will find it very difficult to believe that the child never
" saw the book before. But if to the reading some gesture
" also should be added; if the child should attend to all the
" stops, and observe all the breathings, rough and smooth, it
" will be absolutely impossible to convince the man that this
" is true. From hence, therefore, we may learn, never to
" be deterred from any useful pursuit by the seeming diffi-
" culties that attend it; but to endeavour rather to surmount
" these difficulties by practice and habit*."

A rapidity somewhat approaching to that which is exemplified in reading and writing, has frequently been acquired by those whose attention has been early and constantly directed to arithmetical computations. The quickness of that glance with which they are able to tell, at once, the sum resulting from the addition of long columns of figures, is incredible to those who have not witnessed it; and is not easily explicable by those who have.

* Hampton's Translation.—The above extract forms part of a very interesting discussion concerning the use of an ancient Telegraph.

It is to an acquired rapidity of judgment, resembling what is exhibited in the preceding instances, that I am inclined to ascribe a remarkable circumstance in the intellectual endowments of Sir Isaac Newton, which that great man (if we may credit Whiston), seems to have thought connected with some original peculiarity of genius:—I allude to his intuitive perception of various mathematical conclusions, by no means obvious to ordinary understandings. As an example of this, a well-known property of the Ellipse is mentioned*; of which (though certainly by no means self-evident) Newton is said to have told his friend Mr Cotes, that he saw at once the truth, without the intermediation of any process of reasoning whatsoever. For an explanation of the fact, according to my idea of it, I must refer my readers to some observations which I have stated in *the Philosophy of the Human Mind*. At present I shall only add, as another circumstance which may occasionally mislead a mathematician in estimating the quickness of his own perceptions, That, after having once ascertained the connection between two propositions by a process of reasoning, and fixed this connection in the memory, the one proposition will, in future, suggest the other as its necessary and immediate consequence. In this manner, an experienced mathematician proceeds, as

* That the parallelogram, formed by the tangents passing through the vertices of any two of its conjugate diameters, is always of the same magnitude.

it were, by leaps, from one truth to another; and may sometimes mistake, for an intuitive judgment, a conclusion deduced from a long process of thought, now obliterated from the mind.

Another instance of extraordinary rapidity of thought occurs in individuals who are daily conversant with mechanical inventions. Where a person, possessed of equal intellectual ability, would find himself bewildered and lost among the details of a machine, the practised mechanician comprehends, in an instant, all the relations and dependencies of the different parts. We are apt to ascribe this quickness to a difference of natural capacity; but it is, in reality, chiefly, if not entirely, the effect of Habit in familiarizing the mind to artificial combinations of circumstances; in the same manner in which the general physical laws, which are obvious to the senses of all men, insensibly adapt to themselves the order of their ideas, and render a correspondent set of Habits apparently a Second Nature. Hence it is, that, in viewing a complicated machine, the experienced engineer finds himself *at home* (if I may use a familiar, but very significant phrase); while, on the same occasion, a person of different pursuits, feels as if transported into a new world.

The quickness and variety of intellectual combination, exemplified in every sentence uttered by an *extempore* speak-

er, is the result of analogous habits :—And where such a talent includes, not merely a fluency of correct and eloquent expression, but a perfect command of whatever powers he may possess, whether of argument, of persuasion, of fancy, or of wit, it furnishes unquestionably the most splendid of all the proofs that can be produced, of the astonishing capacities of human genius.—But on this topic (which I have often destined for the subject of a separate Essay) I forbear to enlarge at present.

Similar observations to these might be extended to all the various applications of the understanding. Not that I would insinuate, with Helvetius, that in point of quickness, or of any other mental quality, the whole of our species stand originally on the same level. All that I would be understood to assert amounts to this, that wherever we see the intellectual faculties displayed on particular subjects, with a celerity far surpassing what we are accustomed to remark in ordinary life; instead of forming any rash inference concerning the inequalities of genius in different individuals, we shall, in general, judge more safely, by considering the fact in question, merely as an illustration of those habits of observation and of study, to which some peculiarity of inclination has predisposed, or some peculiarity of situation has trained the mind *.

* A classical author has elegantly conveyed the same maxim, by the order in which

To exemplify this conclusion, I can think of no better instance, than that *military eye* in the survey of a country, which, in some men, appears almost in the form of a Sixth Sense. The French writers allude forcibly to the rapidity of its perceptions, by the phrase *coup d'œil*, which they employ to express it. "It is a talent (says Guibert, in his Essay on Tactics) "which may be improved, but which is not to be acquired by "practice. It is an intuitive faculty, and the gift of Nature; "a gift which she bestows only on a few favourites in the "course of an age." The same author, however, elsewhere qualifies these very strong assertions, by remarking, that the principal means by which a military man acquires it, is daily practice in his youth; constantly keeping in view its culture and improvement, not only when actually employed in the

he has arranged the qualities enumerated in the following sentence: "Vincebat "omnes curâ, vigilantiâ, patientiâ, calliditate, *et celeritate ingenii.*" The last of the catalogue he plainly considered as only the result of the habits imposed by the former.

Montaigne had probably an idea somewhat similar to this, when he remarked, (in speaking of the game of chess)—"La precellence rare et au dessus du commun mes- "sied à un homme d'honneur en chose frivole." A marked and unrivalled pre-eminence in such accomplishments he seems to have considered, as, at once, evidence of a more than ordinary degree of industry and perseverance, directed to an object of little comparative value, and as symptomatic of an undue desire to display advantages over others, which would cease to attract wonder, if the secret were discovered of the time and labour sacrificed to their acquisition.

The weakness alluded to by Montaigne is, in a more peculiar manner, characteristical of those who have been trained up, from childhood, in the habits and prejudices connected with elevated rank.

*field*, but while amusing himself with a journey or with a hunting expedition, in times of peace.—In confirmation of this, he refers to the studies and exercises by which Philopœmen (who has been always peculiarly celebrated for this talent) prepared himself for the duties of his profession; and certainly no example could have been referred to fitter to illustrate the comment, or more directly in opposition to the general maxim. The account given of these studies, by Livy, is so circumstantial and interesting, that I shall make no apology for transcribing it at length; more especially, as it affords a moral lesson, equally applicable to all the various pursuits of mankind.

" Erat autem Philopœmen præcipue in ducendo agmine
" locisque capiendis solertiæ atque usus; nec belli tantum
" *temporibus*, sed etiam in pace, ad id maxime animum ex-
" ercuerat. Ubi iter quopiam faceret, et ad difficilem transitu
" saltum venisset, contemplatus ab omni parte loci naturam,
" quum solus erat, secum ipse agitabat animo; quum comites
" haberet, ab iis quærebat, si hostis eo loco apparuisset, quid
" si a fronte, quid si ab latere hoc aut illo quid si a tergo ado-
" riretur, capiendum consilii foret? Posse instructos recta acie,
" posse inconditum agmen, et tantummodo aptum viæ, occur-
" rere. Quem locum ipse capturus esset, cogitando aut quæren-
" do, exsequebatur; aut quot armatis, aut quo genere armorum
" usurus: quo impedimenta, quo sarcinas, quo turbam iner-

" rem rejiceret; quanto ea aut quali præsidia custodiret; et
" utrum pergere quâ cæpisset ire viâ, an eâ quâ venisset re-
" petere melius esset: castris quoque quem locum caperet,
" quantum munimento amplecteretur loci, quâ opportuna
" aquatio, quâ pabuli lignorumque copia esset; quâ postero
" die castra movendi tutum maxime iter, quæ forma agminis
" foret.——His curis cogitationibusque" (the historian adds)
" ita ab ineunte ætate animum agitaverat, *ut nulla ei nova*
" in tali re cogitatio esset."

The assertion of Guibert, which led me to introduce the foregoing quotation, may perhaps appear to some too extravagant to merit any notice in the present state of science; but it is not more than a century ago, since the common ideas, even of speculative men, concerning the talent to which it relates, were as vague and erroneous as they are at present, with respect to the general theory of our intellectual habits. Accordingly, we find that Folard, in his essay on the *coup d'œil militaire*, labours to correct the prejudices of those who considered a *military eye* as a gift of nature, as strenuously as Mr Burke, Sir J. Reynolds, Dr Gerard, and Mr Alison have combated, in our own times, the prevailing doctrines which class Taste among the simple and original faculties which belong to our species*.

* See Note (N n).

An accurate examination and analysis of our various acquired powers of judgment and intellectual exertion, as they are exemplified in the different walks of life, would, if I am not mistaken, open some prospects of the mind, equally new and interesting. At present, however, I propose to confine myself to the power of Taste; partly on account of its close connection with the train of thinking which I have pursued in the two preceding Essays; and partly of its extensive influence, in a cultivated society, both on the happiness of individuals, and on the general state of manners. My speculations concerning some other powers of the understanding, which I consider as entirely analogous in their origin, will find a place in the sequel of my work on the Human Mind; if I should live to execute that part of my plan, which relates to the varieties of genius, and of intellectual character.

It was with a reference to the Power which I am now to examine, and to the doctrine with respect to it, which I wish at present to establish, that I was led, many years ago, (in treating of those rapid processes of thought, which it is sometimes of importance to bring to light by patient investigation) to take notice of the peculiar difficulty of arresting and detecting our fleeting ideas, in cases where they lead to any interesting conclusion, or excite any pleasant emotion.

The fact seems to be (as I have observed on the same occa-

sion) that "the mind, when once it has felt the pleasure, has "little inclination to retrace the steps by which it arrived at it." It is owing to this, that Taste has been so generally ranked among our original faculties; and that so little attention has hitherto been given to the process by which it is formed. Dr Gerard and Mr Alison, indeed, have analysed, with great ingenuity and success, the most important elements which enter into its composition, as it exists in a well-informed and cultivated mind; and some very valuable observations on the same subject may be collected from Montesquieu, Voltaire, and D'Alembert: but it did not fall under the design of any of these writers to trace the growth of taste from its first seeds in the constitution of our nature; or to illustrate the analogy which it exhibits, in some of the intellectual processes connected with it, to what takes place in various other acquired endowments of the understanding. It is in this point of view, that I propose to consider it in this Essay;—a point of view, in which I am sensible the subject by no means presents the same pleasing and inviting aspect, as when examined in its connection with the rules of philosophical criticism; but in which it is reasonable to expect, that it may afford some new illustrations of the theory of the human mind. The two inquiries, it is obvious, are widely different from each other; resembling somewhat, in their mutual relation, that which exists between Berkeley's analysis of the process by which children learn to judge of distances

and magnitudes; and the researches of the Optician concerning the defects to which vision is liable, and the means by which art is enabled to enlarge the sphere of its perceptions.

Different, however, as these inquiries are in their aim, they may perhaps be found to reflect light on each other, in the course of our progress; and, indeed, I should distrust the justness of my own opinions, were they to lead me to any conclusions materially different from those which have been sanctioned by so many and so high authorities.

## CHAPTER SECOND.

### GRADUAL PROGRESS BY WHICH TASTE IS FORMED.

I HAVE already said, that notwithstanding the attempts which a few philosophers have made to ascertain the nature of Taste, the prevailing notions concerning it are far from being correct or definite. Of this, no doubt can be entertained by those who have observed the manner in which it is classed by some of the latest writers on the human mind, in their analysis of our intellectual faculties; or who recollect the definitions given of it, in our most popular books of criticism. It is sufficient for me to mention that of Dr Blair, according to which its characteristical quality is said to consist in "a power of receiving pleasure from the beauties of nature "and of art." From the following lines, too, it would appear

that the idea of it entertained by Akenside was nearly the same:

> " What then is Taste, but these internal powers,
> " Active and strong, and *feelingly alive*
> " *To each fine impulse?*"

It is in consequence of this *gift* that we are supposed to be susceptible of the pleasures resulting from a poem, a picture, a landscape, a well-proportioned building, a regular set of features; and it is to those individuals who possess it, that Nature is understood to have confined exclusively the right of pronouncing judgment in the fine arts, and even on the beauties of her own productions.

If these ideas be just, it evidently follows, that the degree of our taste is proportioned to the degree of pleasure we are fitted to receive from its appropriate objects. The fact, however, is certainly different. Many whose taste is indisputably good, contemplate with little interest what they acknowledge to be beautiful; while others, in whom the slightest pretension to taste would be justly treated with ridicule, are affected, on the same occasion, with rapture and enthusiasm. Nor are the words Taste and Sensibility by any means conceived to be synonymous in the common apprehensions of mankind. On the contrary, a more

than ordinary share of the latter quality is apt to be regarded as pretty strong evidence of some deficiency in the former.

That Taste does not consist in sensibility alone, appears farther from this, that it is susceptible of improvement from culture, in a higher degree, perhaps, than any other power of the mind; whereas the acuteness of all our feelings is diminished by a repetition of the impression.—The truth of this last remark will be fully established in another part of my work, where I shall have occasion to contrast the opposite effects of habit on our passive impressions and on our active principles.

These general observations are sufficient to shew, that the definition of Taste, formerly quoted, is at least incomplete; and that this power must necessarily include other elements in its composition.

In order to ascertain what these elements are, the first step seems to be, to examine that particular class of *objects* with which taste is conversant. In this part of our inquiry, the conclusions to which we have been led by the foregoing speculations, will, I hope, furnish some useful principles.

From the train of thought which I pursued in a former

Essay, it appeared, that, even in those objects of taste which are presented to the mind, by the sense of Seeing alone, an indefinite variety of circumstances, of very different kinds, may conspire in producing that agreeable effect, to the cause of which we give the name of Beauty :—colours, forms, motion, proportion, fitness, symmetry, variety, utility, with all the modifications of which they are susceptible;—together with the numberless charms attached to moral expression, or arising from associations established by custom, between the material world and our complicated frame. It appeared farther, that in such instances, the pleasing emotion (heightened, as it frequently is, by the concomitant pleasures of Sound) continues still, as far as our consciousness can judge of it, to be simple and uncompounded, and that all the different sources from which it proceeds are naturally united, and identified in our conceptions, with the organic impressions on the eye or on the ear *.

* Voltaire furnishes an apposite illustration of this remark, in his description of the opera at Paris :

" Il faut se rendre à ce palais magique,
" Ou les beaux vers, la danse, la musique,
" L'art de charmer les yeux par les couleurs,
" L'art plus heureux de séduire les cœurs,
" De cent plaisirs font un plaisir unique."

Akenside has remarked this disposition of the mind, to identify the sources of the secondary or accessory pleasures it enjoys, with those perceptions of seeing and hear-

It is scarcely necessary for me to remark, that it is not by reasoning *à priori*, that we can hope to make any progress in ascertaining and separating the respective effects of the various ingredients which may be thus blended in the composition of Beauty. In analysing these, we must proceed on the same general principles by which we are guided in investigating the physical and chemical properties of material substances; that is, we must have recourse to a series of observations and experiments on beautiful objects of various kinds; attending diligently to the agreeable or the disagreeable effects we experience, in the case of these diversified combinations. The conclusions we thus form, may, it is obvious, enable us afterwards to recompound the same elements, according to our own fancy, so as to diversify or to increase the pleasure pro-

ing, which form the *physical basis* (if I may use the expression) of our idea of the Beautiful. The examples he has selected are equally familiar and striking:

"So, while we taste the fragrance of the rose,
"Glows not her blush the fairer? while we view,
"Amid the noon-tide walk, a limpid rill
"Gush thro' the trickling herbage, to the thirst
"Of summer yielding the delicious draught
"Of cool refreshment; o'er the mossy brink
"Shines not the surface clearer, and the waves
"With sweeter music murmur as they flow?"

Another illustration of the same thing may be collected from the wonderful effect on the estimate we form of the beauty of a particular landscape, by the agreeable or disagreeable temperature of the atmosphere at the moment we see it. How very different seems the aspect of the same scene, according as the wind happens to blow from the East, or from the West!

duced; while they furnish an agreeable exercise to the intellectual powers, in tracing the beauties, both of nature and of art, to their general laws.

In all these experiments and observations, it is worth while to add, the result is judged of by attending to our own feelings; as, in our researches concerning *heat*, we appeal to the thermometer. By habits of this kind, therefore, it is reasonable to expect that we may acquire a power of remarking those slighter impressions, whether pleasant or painful, which are overlooked by ordinary observers; in the same manner as the touch of a blind man appears to improve, in consequence of the peculiar attention which he is led to bestow on the perceptions of the hand. Our sensibility to beauty does not, in this way, become really more exquisite and delightful than before; but, by attracting our notice in a greater degree, it is rendered a nicer and more delicate instrument for assisting the judgment in its estimate of facts.

Nor is it only in analysing the pleasing ingredients which enter into the composition of beautiful objects, that observations and experiments are necessary to those who wish to study the principles of Beauty, with a view to their practical applications. Whether their aim may be to produce new combinations of their own, or to pronounce on the merits and

defects of those executed by others, it is of essential importance, that they should be able to separate what is pleasing from what obstructs the agreeable effect. Independently of experience, however, the most exquisite sensibility, seconded by the most acute intellect, cannot lead to a single conclusion concerning the particular circumstances from which the pleasure or uneasiness arises. In proportion, indeed, to the degree of the observer's sensibility, he will be delighted with the former and offended with the latter; but till he is able to draw the line distinctly between them, his sensibility will afford no lights of which he can avail himself in future, either as an artist or as a judge. It is in this *distinguishing* or *discriminating* perception, that the power denoted by the word Taste seems to me chiefly to consist.

The fact is perfectly analogous in that *bodily sense* from which this mental power derives its name. A dealer in wines is able, in any of the common articles of his trade, to detect the least ingredient which does not properly enter into the composition; and, in pronouncing it to be good or bad, can fix at once on the specific qualities which please or offend. It is not on the sensibility of his organ that this power depends. *Some* degree of sensibility is undoubtedly necessary to enable him to receive any sensation at all; but the degree of his distinguishing power is by no means proportioned to the degree of his sensibility. At the same time, it is manifestly

this distinguishing power alone, which renders his judgments in wine of any use to himself in his purchases, or of any value to those whose gratification is the object of his art.

Mr Hume, in his Essay on the Standard of Taste, has approached nearly to this view of the subject, in the application which he makes to it, of a story in Don Quixote: And, although I can by no means assent to the general train of reasoning which that essay contains, I cannot help availing myself of the support, which, on this fundamental point, my conclusions may receive from their coincidence with those of so profound a writer; as well as of the very happy illustration which he has employed in its statement.

"It is with good reason," says Sancho to the squire with the great nose, "that I pretend to have a judgment in wine. "This is a quality hereditary in our family. Two of my "kinsmen were called to give their opinion of a hogshead "which was supposed to be excellent, being old and of a "good vintage. One of them tastes it; considers it; and "after mature reflection pronounces the wine to be good, "were it not for a small taste of leather which he perceived "in it. The other, after using the same precautions, gives "also his verdict in favour of the wine; but with the reserve "of a taste of iron, which he could easily distinguish. You "cannot imagine how they were both ridiculed for their

" judgment. But who laughed in the end? On emptying " the hogshead, there was found at the bottom an old key, " with a leathern thong tied to it."

Another circumstance, remarkably characteristical of intellectual Taste, is the *instantaneousness* with which its decisions appear, in most instances, to be formed. In this respect, likewise, it resembles the external sense after which it is named; and indeed the analogy between the two powers is, in various points, so complete, as sufficiently to account for an application of the same expressions to both; and even to justify those writers who have attempted to illustrate the theory of the former, by an examination of the more obvious and familiar perceptions of the latter.

It is somewhat curious, that Voltaire should have been so strongly impressed with this analogy, as to conclude, that it must have presented itself universally to the human understanding, in all ages of the world. " The feeling" (he observes) " by which we distinguish beauties and defects in the " arts, is prompt in its discernment, and anticipates reflec- " tion, like the sensations of the tongue and palate. Both " kinds of Taste, too, enjoy, with a voluptuous satisfaction, " what is good; and reject what is bad, with an emotion " of disgust. Accordingly," (he adds) " this metaphorical

"application of the word *taste*, is common to all known "languages *."

It is scarcely necessary for me to remark, that the metaphor here mentioned by Voltaire, is entirely of modern origin. Petronius, indeed, as Dr Beattie has observed, seems to have employed *sapor* in this figurative sense; but the use he has made of that word is so peculiar to himself, that it has been urged as a presumption in favour of the opinion of those critics who think, that the book which passes under his name is, at least in part, the composition of a later period †.

Although, however, in the ancient languages, the word Taste was certainly not employed in that metaphorical acceptation which has now become so familiar to the ear, it is evident that the analogy which has led to the metaphor did not entirely escape the ancient critics. Quinctilian, in particular, speaking of this very power, observes, "That it is not to be "communicated by instruction any more than the senses of "taste or of smell ‡;" and with respect to some of its ob-

* Encyclop. art. *Gout.*

† The passage in question is this: "Sermonem habes non publici *saporis*." i. e. (commentante et interprete Gesnero) non placentem vulgo, sed sapientibus. Ad *sensum communem*, et *intelligentiam* refertur.

‡ Non magis arte traditur quam gustus aut odor.

jects, he tells us, that "they are perceived by a latent judg-"ment of the mind, resembling the decision of the palate." "Quod sentitur latente judicio, *velut palato*." After having perceived the analogy so distinctly, it is somewhat surprising, that the very convenient metaphor which it seems so naturally to suggest, should not occur in any of their writings.

A passage, coinciding still more explicitly with some of the foregoing ideas, occurs in the Theætetus of Plato. "There "is no question" (says Socrates in this Dialogue) "concern-"ing that which is agreeable to each person, but concerning "what will, in time to come, be agreeable, of which all men "are not equally judges.—You and the cook may judge of "a dish on the table equally well; but, while the dish is "making, the cook can better foretel what will ensue from "this or that manner of composing it*." How exactly does this coincide with that remarkable expression which Lord Chatham applied to the Taste displayed in landscape-gardening, when he spoke of its *prophetic eye*?

The metaphorical use made of the word Taste in the languages of modern Europe, is perfectly analogous to various other expressions transferred to the Mind from the external senses. Such, for example, is the word Sagacity, borrowed

* Plat. Op. Tom. i, p. 178.—Edit. Stephan.

from the sense of smelling; the words Foresight, Intuition, and many others, borrowed from the sense of seeing; Acuteness and Penetration, borrowed from touch. The use made by the French, of the word *tact*, is a circumstance still more directly in point; indeed so much so, that the definition given of it by some of their best authors, may be applied very nearly to Taste in its figurative acceptation. "The "word *tact*" (says Roubaud) "is now, in general, employed "to express a decision of the mind, prompt, subtle, and just; "a decision which seems to anticipate the slow processes of "reflection and reasoning, and to proceed from a sort of in- "stinctive suggestion, conducting us instantaneously and un- "erringly to the truth."

The chief difference in the meaning of these two words seems to me to consist in this,—that Taste presupposes a certain degree of original susceptibility, and a certain degree of relish, stronger or weaker, for the beauties of nature; whereas the word *tact* is appropriated to things in which the power of judging is wholly acquired; as, in distinguishing the hands of different masters in painting, and in the other decisions concerning the merits of artists which fall under the province of the *connoisseur*. It is applied also to a quick perception of those delicate shades in character and manners, which are objects of study to the man of the world*. In this last

* Note (O o).

sense, the English proverbial expression of *feeling one's way*, seems to suppose such a power as the French denote by the word *tact;* and has probably been suggested by some similar association.

In these metaphorical applications of the word *tact*, the allusion is plainly made to the more *delicate* perceptions of touch; such, for instance, as those which, to a blind man, supply the place of sight—in a manner somewhat analogous to that in which a nice *tact* supersedes, upon the subjects with which it is conversant, the exercise of reasoning. Perhaps, too, the analogy may have been strengthened by the astonishing perceptions which, in some of the insect tribes, seem to enlarge the sphere of this sense, far beyond its ordinary limits.

> "The spider's touch, how exquisitely fine,
> "Feels at each thread, and lives along the line."

The two circumstances which I have chiefly enlarged upon, in the foregoing observations on the principle of Taste, are, First, its power of analytical discrimination or discernment in the examination of its appropriate objects; and Secondly, the promptitude with which its decisions are commonly pronounced. The process by which these characteristical qualities of taste are gradually formed, may be easily

conceived from some remarks which I have stated in the Philosophy of the Human Mind, when treating "of the influence of casual associations on our speculative conclusions."

"As the connections among physical events" (I have there observed) "are discovered to us by experience alone, it is "evident that, when we see a phenomenon preceded by a "number of circumstances, it is impossible for us to de- "termine, by any reasoning *à priori*, which of these cir- "cumstances are to be regarded as the *constant*, and which "as the *accidental* antecedents of the effect. If, in the "course of our experience, the same combination of cir- "cumstances is always exhibited to us without any alter- "ation, and is invariably followed by the same result, "we must forever remain ignorant, whether this result be "connected with the whole combination, or with one or "more of the circumstances combined; and therefore, if we "are anxious, upon any occasion, to produce a similar effect, "the only rule that we can follow with perfect security, is, to "imitate, in every particular circumstance, the combination "which we have seen. It is only where we have an oppor- "tunity of separating such circumstances from each other; "of combining them variously together, and of observing "the effects which result from these different experiments, "that we can ascertain with precision, the general laws of "nature, and strip physical causes of their accidental and "unessential concomitants."

This view of the process by which the general laws of the material world are investigated, I have endeavoured to illustrate, in the same Section of my book, by comparing it with the natural progress of the healing art, from the superstitious ceremonies employed among savage tribes, to that simplicity of practice which distinguishes an enlightened and philosophical physician.

In the Section which immediately follows, I have observed, that the substance of the foregoing quotation is strictly applicable to the process, by which the principle of Taste is formed in the mind of an individual. "That certain objects are "fitted to give pleasure, and others disgust, to the mind, we "know from experience alone; and it is impossible for us, "by any reasoning *à priori*, to explain how the pleasure "or the pain is produced. In the works of nature, we find, "in many instances, the elements of beauty involved among "circumstances, which are either indifferent, or which ob- "struct the general effect: and it is only by a train of ex- "periments that we can separate these circumstances from "the rest, and ascertain with what particular qualities the "pleasing effect is connected. Accordingly, the inexperi- "enced artist, when he copies nature, will copy her servilely, "that he may be certain of securing the pleasing effect; and "the beauties of his performances will be encumbered with "a number of superfluous or of disagreeable concomitants.

"Experience and observation alone can enable him to make "this discrimination: to exhibit the principles of beauty "pure and unadulterated, and to form a creation of his own, "more faultless than ever fell under the examination of his "senses."

"This analogy" (I have added) "between the natural "progress of taste, and the natural progress of physical know- "ledge, proceeds on the supposition, that, as in the material "world there are general facts, beyond which philosophy is "unable to proceed; so, in the constitution of man, there is "an inexplicable adaptation of the mind to the objects with "which his faculties are conversant; in consequence of which, "these objects are fitted to produce agreeable or disagreeable "emotions. In both cases, reasoning may be employed with "propriety to refer particular phenomena to general prin- "ciples; but in both cases, we must at last arrive at prin- "ciples of which no account can be given, but that such is "the will of our Maker."

Notwithstanding, however, the strong analogy between the two cases, there are some important circumstances in which they differ from each other. One of these was already hint- ed at, when I remarked, in a former part of this discussion, that as, in our experimental researches concerning the laws of matter, the ultimate appeal is always made to our external

senses, so, in our experimental researches concerning the principles of beauty, the ultimate appeal is always made to our own pleasant or unpleasant emotions. In conducting these last experiments, we cannot, it is evident, avail ourselves of any thing analogous to the instrumental aids which the mechanical arts have furnished to our bodily organs; and are somewhat in the same situation in which the chemist would be placed, if he had nothing to appeal to in his estimates of Heat, but the test of his own sensations. The only expedient we can have recourse to for supplying this defect is to repeat our experiments, under every possible variation of circumstances by which the state and temper of our minds are likely to be affected; and to compare the general result with the experience of others, whose peculiar habits and associations are the most different from our own.

On the other hand, it is of great importance to observe, that if the circumstance just remarked lays us under some inconvenience in our researches concerning the principles of Beauty, we possess, in conducting these, the singular advantage of always carrying about with us the materials of our experiments. In the infancy of Taste, indeed, the first step is to compare object with object;—one scene with another scene; one picture with another picture; one poem with another poem:—and, at all times, such comparisons are pleasing and instructive. But when the mind has once acquired a certain

familiarity with the beauties of Nature and of Art, much may be effected, in the way of experiment, by the power of Imagination alone. Instead of waiting to compare the scene now before me with another scene of the same kind, or of actually trying the effects resulting from the various changes of which its parts are susceptible, I can multiply and vary my ideal trials at will, and can anticipate from my own feelings, in these different cases, the improvement or the injury that would result from carrying them into execution. The fact is still more striking, when the original combination is furnished by Imagination herself, and when she compounds and decompounds it, as fancy or curiosity may happen to dictate. In this last case, the materials of our experiments, the instruments employed in our analysis or synthesis, and the laboratory in which the whole process is carried on, are all alike intellectual. They all exist in the observer's mind; and are all supplied, either immediately by the principles of his nature, or by these principles cultivated and assisted by superinduced habits.

The foregoing comparison is not the less just, that experimental researches concerning the principles of Beauty are seldom or never instituted with the same scientific formality as in chemistry or physics; or, that the mind is, in most cases, wholly unconscious that such experiments have ever been made. When the curiosity is once fairly engaged by this

particular class of objects, a series of intellectual experiments is from that moment begun, without any guidance from the rules of philosophizing. Nor is this a singular fact in human nature; for it is by a process perfectly similar (as I remarked in a former Essay), that the use of language is at first acquired. It is by hearing the same word used, on a variety of different occasions, and by constant attempts to investigate some common meaning which shall tally with them all, that a child comes at last to seize, with precision, the idea which the word is generally employed to convey; and it is in the same manner that a person of mature understanding is forced to proceed, in decyphering the signification of particular phrases, when he studies, without the help of a dictionary, a language of which he possesses but a slight and inaccurate knowledge. There is here carried on, in the mind of the child, a process of *natural induction*, on the same general principles which are recommended in Bacon's philosophy: and such exactly do I conceive the process to be, by which the power of Taste acquires, insensibly, in the course of a long and varied experience, a perception of the general principles of Beauty.

The account which has now been given of the habits of observation and comparison, by which Taste acquires its powers of *discrimination* or *discernment*, explains, at the same time, the *promptitude* with which its judgments are commonly

pronounced. As the experiments subservient to its formation are carried on entirely in the mind itself, they present, every moment, a ready field for the gratification of curiosity; and in those individuals whose thoughts are strongly turned to the pursuit, they furnish matter of habitual employment to the intellectual faculties. These experiments are, at the same time, executed with an ease and celerity unknown in our operations on Matter; insomuch, that the experiment and its result, seem both to be comprehended in the same instant of time. The process, accordingly, vanishes completely from our recollection; nor do we attempt to retrace it to ourselves in *thought*, far less to express it to others *in words*, any more than we are disposed, in our common estimates of distance, to analyse the acquired perceptions of vision.

In the experimental proceedings of Taste, another circumstance conspires to prevent such an analysis; I mean, the tendency of the pleasurable effect to engross, or at least to distract the attention. I took notice, in the work last quoted, of "the peculiar difficulty of arresting and detecting our fleeting "ideas, in cases where they lead to any interesting conclusion, "or excite any pleasant emotion;" and I mentioned, as the obvious reason of this difficulty, that "the mind, when once it "has enjoyed the pleasure, has little inclination to retrace "the steps by which it arrived at it." I have added, in the

same place, that "this last circumstance is one great cause of "the difficulty attending philosophical criticism *."

In order to illustrate the full import of this remark, it is necessary for me to observe, that when any dispute occurs in which Taste is concerned, the only possible way of bringing the parties to an agreement, is by appealing to an induction similar to that by which the judging powers of taste are insensibly formed; or by appealing to certain acknowledged principles which critics have already investigated by such an induction. Indeed it is in this way alone, that any general conclusions, in matters of this sort, can be ascertained. The difference which has been so much insisted on by some writers, between philosophical criticism, and that which they have been pleased to call experimental, or tentative, turns entirely on the greater or less generality of the principles to which the appeal is made. Where the tentative critic contents himself with an accumulation of parallel passages and of critical authorities, the philosopher appeals to the acknowledged sources of pleasure in the constitution of human nature. But these sources were at first investigated by experiment and induction, no less than the rules which are deduced from an examination of the beauties of Homer and of Virgil; or, to speak more correctly, it is the former alone that are ascertained by induction, properly so called; while the others of-

* Philosophy of the Human Mind, Chap. ii.

ten amount to litle more than the statements of an empirical and unenlightened experience.

A dispute somewhat analogous to this might be conceived to arise about the comparative distances of two different objects from a particular spot (about the distances, I shall suppose, of two large and spreading Oaks); each party insisting confidently on the evidence of his senses, in support of his own judgment. How is it possible to bring them to an agreement, but by appealing to those very circumstances, or signs, upon which all our perceptions of distance proceed, even when we are the least aware of any exercise of thought? If the one party should observe, for instance, to his companion, that the minute parts of the tree, which the latter affirms to be the most remote,—that its smaller ramifications, its foliage, and the texture of its bark, are seen much more distinctly than the corresponding parts of the other; he could not fail in immediately convincing him of the inaccuracy of his estimate. In like manner, the philosophical principles of criticism, when obtained by an extensive and cautious induction, may be fairly appealed to in questions of taste; although Taste itself, considered as a power of the mind, must, in every individual, be the result of his own personal experience; no less than the acquired powers of perception by which his eye estimates the distances and magnitudes of objects. In this point of view, therefore, we may apply literally to intellectual taste, the as-

sertion formerly quoted from Quinctilian: "Non magis arte "traditur quam gustus aut odor."

I must not conclude this branch of my subject without doing justice to some authors who appear to have entertained perfectly just and correct ideas concerning the nature of Taste, as an *acquired principle*, although none of them, as far as I know, has at all examined the process by which it is generated. The first author I shall quote is Sir Joshua Reynolds, whose sagacity often seizes happily on the truth, without the formality of logical deduction. "The real substance" (he observes) "of what goes under the name of taste, is fixed "and established in the nature of things. There are cer- "tain and regular causes by which the imagination and the "passions of men are affected; and the knowledge of these "causes is acquired by a laborious and diligent investigation "of nature, and by the same slow progress, as wisdom or "knowledge of every kind, however instantaneous its opera- "tions may appear when thus acquired."

Mr Burke has stated still more explicitly his dissent from the opinion, that "taste is a separate faculty of the mind, and "distinct from the judgment and imagination; a species of "instinct, by which we are struck naturally, and at the first "glance, without any previous reasoning, with the excel- "lencies, or the defects of a composition."—"So far" (he

continues) " as the imagination and the passions are concern-
" ed, I believe it true, that the reason is little consulted ; but
" where disposition, where decorum, where congruity, are con-
" cerned, in short, wherever the best taste differs from the worst,
" I am convinced that the understanding operates, and no-
" thing else ; and its operation is in reality far from being al-
" ways sudden, or, when it is sudden, it is often far from being
" right. Men of the best taste, by consideration, come fre-
" quently to change those early and precipitate judgments,
" which the mind, from its aversion to neutrality and doubt,
" loves to form on the spot. It is known that the taste (what-
" ever it is) is improved exactly as we improve our judgment,
" by extending our knowledge, by a steady attention to our
" object, and by frequent exercise. They who have not taken
" these methods, if their taste decides quickly, it is always un-
" certainly; and their quickness is owing to their presumption
" and rashness, and not any hidden irradiation that in a mo-
" ment dispels all darkness from their minds. But they who
" have cultivated that species of knowledge which makes the
" object of taste, by degrees, and habitually, attain not only a
" soundness, but a readiness of judgment, as men do by the
" same methods on all other occasions. At first they are ob-
" liged to spell, but at last they read with ease and with ce-
" lerity ; but this celerity of its operation is no proof that the
" taste is a distinct faculty. Nobody, I believe, has attended
" the course of a discussion, which turned upon matter with-

" in the sphere of mere naked reason, but must have observ-
" ed the extreme readiness with which the whole process of
" the argument is carried on, the grounds discovered, the ob-
" jections raised and answered, and the conclusions drawn
" from premises, with a quickness altogether as great as the
" taste can be supposed to work with; and yet where no-
" thing but plain reason either is, or can be suspected to ope-
" rate. To multiply principles for every different appearance
" is useless, and unphilosophical too, in a high degree."

The only other passage I shall add to these quotations is from Mr Hughes, who, almost a century ago, described the nature and *genesis* of taste, with admirable good sense and conciseness, in the following terms: " What we call Taste,
" is a kind of *extempore* judgment; it is a settled habit of dis-
" tinguishing, without staying to attend to rules or ratiocina-
" tion, and arises from long use and experience."

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I intend to resume, on some future occasion, the subject of this Chapter, and to illustrate that progress of Taste from rudeness to refinement, which accompanies the advancement of social civilization. In this respect, its history will be found to be somewhat analogous to that of human reason; the taste of each successive age being formed on the study of

more perfect models than that of the age before it; and leaving, in its turn, to after times a more elevated ground-work, on which they may raise their own superstructure.

This traditionary Taste (imbibed in early life, partly from the received rules of critics, and partly from the study of approved models of excellence) is all that the bulk of men aspire to, and perhaps all that they are qualified to acquire. But it is the province of a *leading mind* to outstrip its contemporaries, by instituting new experiments for its own improvement; and, in proportion as the observation and experience of the race are enlarged, the means are facilitated of accomplishing such combinations with success, by the multiplication of those selected materials out of which they are to be formed.

In individuals of this description, Taste includes Genius as one of its elements; as Genius, in any one of the fine arts, necessarily implies a certain portion of Taste. In both cases, precepts and models, although of inestimable value, leave much to be done by an inventive imagination.

In the mind of a man who feels and judges for himself, a large proportion of the rules which guide his decisions exist only in his own understanding. Many of them he probably never thought of clothing with language even to himself;

and some of them would certainly, if he should attempt to embody them in words, elude all his efforts to convey their import to others.

"What we call *genius*" (says Reynolds) "begins, not "where rules, abstractedly taken, end; but where known, "vulgar, and trite rules have no longer any place."——"It "is true, these refined principles cannot be always made "palpable, like the more gross rules of art; yet it does not "follow, but that the mind may be put in such a train, that "it shall perceive, by a kind of scientific sense, that proprie-"ty, which words can but very feebly suggest."

All this will be found to apply literally to original or inventive Taste, and to suggest matter for very curious and useful reflection.—But some other views of this power appear to me to form a more natural sequel to the foregoing observations; and to these accordingly, I shall confine myself at present, in the farther prosecution of the subject of this Essay.

# CHAPTER THIRD.

## DIFFERENT MODIFICATIONS OF TASTE.—DISTINCTION BETWEEN TASTE, AND THE NATURAL SENSIBILITY TO BEAUTY.

FROM the account formerly given of the origin and progress of our notions with respect to the Beautiful, it appeared, that the circumstances which please in objects of Taste, are of two very different kinds. First, those which derive their effect from the organical adaptation of the human frame to the external universe; and Secondly, those which please in consequence of associations formed gradually by experience. Among the various particulars belonging to this *second* class (a class which comprehends by far the most important elements which, in such an age as ours, enter into the composition of the beautiful) a very obvious distinction may be made. (1.) Such beauties as owe their existence to associations re-

sulting necessarily from the common circumstances of the human race; and therefore extending their influence, more or less, to all mankind. Examples of these universal associations occur in the uniformity of language (remarked in the two preceding Essays) among various civilized nations, in speaking of Beauty and of Sublimity. (2.) Beauties which have no merit but what depends on custom and fashion; or on certain peculiarities in the situation and history of the individual. Of the two last descriptions of beauty, the former, it is evident, agree in one very essential respect, with the organical beauties first mentioned. Both of them have their source in the principles of Human Nature (comprehending, under this phrase, not only the natural *constitution*, but the natural *condition* of man); and, accordingly, they both fall under the consideration of that sort of criticism which forms a branch of the philosophy of the human mind. The associations on which they are founded, have equally a claim to a place among the elements of the Beautiful; nor can any theory of Beauty be admitted as sufficiently comprehensive, in which either the one or the other is overlooked.

As an illustration of this, I shall mention only Mr Burke's theory, which excludes from the idea of Beauty all considerations of proportion, fitness, and utility. In order to justify such exclusions as these, it surely is not sufficient to shew, that the qualities just mentioned cannot be

brought under a particular and arbitrary definition. The question for the philosopher to consider is, what has led mankind, in ancient as well as in modern times, to class together these, and a variety of other qualities, under one common name; and frequently to employ the name of some one of them to comprehend the whole. A passage formerly quoted from Cicero affords an instance in point: "Itaque eorum "ipsorum, quæ adspectu sentiuntur, nullum aliud animal "pulchritudinem, venustatem, convenientiam partium sentit; "quam similitudinem natura ratioque ab oculis ad animum "transferens, multo etiam magis pulchritudinem, constan-"tiam, ordinem in consiliis factisque conservandum putat," &c. &c.—"*Formam* quidem ipsam, Marce fili, et tanquam "faciem Honesti vides; quæ, si oculis cerneretur, mirabiles "amores (ut ait Plato) excitaret sapientiæ."

In favour of Mr Burke's opinion, it must indeed be admitted, that those systems are completely erroneous, which would resolve the whole of Beauty into any one of the three qualities which he excludes from the idea of it, or even into all the three combined, without the co-operation of any thing else. But it is going, at least, as far into the opposite extreme, to say that *none* of these is entitled to a place among the elements which can possibly belong to its composition

* Note (P p).

According to this view of the subject, it would be quite unnecessary to distinguish, in our subsequent reasonings, that species of beauty which results from the physical relation between our organs of perception and external objects, from that which depends on natural and universal associations; and I shall therefore apply to them the common appellation of Universal Beauties, in opposition to those Arbitrary Beauties, the admiration of which has been confined to particular places, or to particular periods.

Among the associations, however, on which these arbitrary beauties depend, there are some varieties, of which it may be proper to take notice, before we proceed to consider the various appearances which Taste may assume in different minds. The following list seems to comprehend those which are chiefly entitled to our attention.

I. Classical Associations:—Inspired by the remains of ancient Greece and Rome; and, of course, extending to all who receive the advantages of a learned education in every quarter of the civilized world. The authority of these is, in all cases, great; and, in some cases, (particularly in sculpture and in architecture) is now so consecrated by established opinion, as almost to preclude all criticism or discussion. In poetry, also, they have added immensely to our natural resources, particularly by the beautiful system of mythology with which they are interwoven;—but they have, at the

same time, warped our Taste in various instances; and have certainly no claims to our servile imitation, where they happen to deviate from the standard of nature. In every instance where there is no such deviation, their authority seems justly entitled to the next place (but a very subordinate place) after those associations which belong universally to our species. It must not, however, be imagined, that, in any instance, they furnish us with principles from which there lies no appeal; nor should it be forgotten, that their influence does not reach to the most numerous class of the people, in the most refined societies.

2. National or local Associations.—Where these are not widely at variance with universal associations, they exert over the heart a power greater perhaps than that of any other associations whatsoever; and sometimes (as seems to have happened in the case of most French critics) they acquire an ascendant even over the impressions of Nature herself. But this influence being confined necessarily within the national pale (however ample the resources are which it furnishes for local and fugitive Poetry), is much more likely to mislead than to guide our researches concerning the principles of philosophical criticism.

3. Personal Associations:—Such as those which arise from the accidental style of natural beauty in the spot where we

have passed our childhood and early youth; from the peculiarities in the features of those whom we have loved; and other circumstances connected with our own individual feelings. Of these it is necessary that every man, who aspires to please or to instruct others, should divest himself to the utmost of his power; or, at least, that he should guard against their undue ascendant over his mind, when he exercises either his Imagination or his Taste, in works addressed to the public.

Under this head, I must not omit to mention the influence of vanity and selfishness on the judgments of some men, even concerning the beauties of nature;—the interest which the attachment to *property* creates, rendering them alive to every trifling recommendation belonging to what is their own, while it blinds them to the most prominent beauties in the property of their neighbours. Gresset has seized happily this intellectual and moral weakness, in his charming comedy of the *Méchant*. But, as it is more connected with the study of Character, than with that of Philosophical Criticism, I shall not enlarge upon it farther at present.

Corresponding to the distinction which I have been attempting to illustrate between Universal and Arbitrary Beauties, there are two different modifications of Taste; modifications which are not *always* united, (perhaps *seldom* united)

in the same person. The one enables a writer or an artist to rise superior to the times in which he lives, and emboldens him to trust his reputation to the suffrages of the human race, and of the ages which are yet to come. The other is the foundation of that humbler, though more profitable sagacity, which teaches the possessor how to suit his manufactures to the market; to judge before-hand of the reception which any new production is to meet with, and to regulate his exertions accordingly. The one must be cultivated by those habits of abstraction and study, which, withdrawing the thoughts from the unmeaning particularities of individual perception, and the capricious drapery of conventional manners, familiarize the mind to *the general forms of beautiful nature;* or to Beauties which the classical genius of antiquity has copied from *these,* and which, like *these,* are unfading and immortal. The proper sphere of the other is such a capital as London or Paris. It is there that the judges are to be found from whose decision it acknowledges no appeal; and it is in such a situation alone, that it can be cultivated with advantage. Dr Johnson has well described (in a prologue spoken by Garrick, when he first opened the theatre at Drury-Lane) the trifling solicitudes and the ever-varying attentions to which those are doomed, who submit thus to be the ministers and slaves of public folly:

> "Hard is *his* fate, who here, by fortune plac'd,
> "Must watch the wild vicissitudes of Taste;

"With every meteor of caprice must play,
"And catch the new-blown bubbles of the day."

The ground-work of this last species of Taste (if it deserves the name) is a certain *facility of association*, acquired by early and constant intercourse with society; more particularly, with those classes of society who are looked up to as supreme legislators in matters of fashion; a habit of mind, the tendency of which is to render the sense of the Beautiful (as well as the sense of what is Right and Wrong) easily susceptible of modification from the contagion of example. It is a habit by no means inconsistent with a certain degree of original sensibility; nay, it requires, perhaps, some original sensibility as its basis: but this sensibility, in consequence of the habit which it has itself contributed to establish, soon becomes transient and useless; losing all connection with Reason and the Moral Principles, and alive only to such impressions as fashion recognizes and sanctions. The other species of Taste, founded on the study of Universal Beauty (and which, for the sake of distinction, I shall call *Philosophical Taste*) implies a sensibility, deep and permanent to those objects of affection, admiration, and reverence, which interested the youthful heart, while yet a stranger to the opinions and ways of the world. Its most distinguishing characteristics, accordingly, are strong domestic and local attachments, accompanied with that enthusiastic love of Nature, Simplicity and Truth, which,

in every department, both of art and of science, is the best and surest presage of Genius. It is this sensibility that gives rise to the habits of attentive observation by which such a Taste can alone be formed; and it is this also that, binding and perpetuating the associations which such a Taste supposes, fortifies the mind against the fleeting caprices which the votaries of fashion watch and obey.

In the farther prosecution of this subject, as well as in the former part of this Essay, my observations must be understood as referring *chiefly* to that sort of Taste which I have now distinguished by the epithet *philosophical*. It may, at the same time, be proper to remark, that a great part of these observations, particularly those which I have already made on the process by which Taste acquires its *discrimination* and its *promptitude* of perception, are applicable, with some slight alterations, to that which has for its object local and temporary modes, no less than to the other, which is acquired by the study of universal beauty.

The two distinguishing characteristics of Good Taste (it has been justly observed by different writers) are *correctness* and *delicacy*; the former having for its province the detection of Blemishes, the latter the perception of those more refined Beauties which cultivated minds alone can feel. This distinction has been illustrated (and I think not unhappily) by

the general complexion of Swift's criticisms contrasted with that of Addison's.—Of that quality more particularly, which is properly called *delicacy of taste*, no better exemplifications can anywhere be found, than occur in some of the critical papers on Paradise Lost, published in the Spectator.—Where this intellectual power exists in its most perfect state, *both* these qualities are necessarily implied.

It was remarked, in the beginning of these inquiries, concerning Taste, that although it presupposes a certain degree of sensibility, yet it is not by men whose sensibility is most exquisite, that it is commonly cultivated with the greatest success. One principal reason of this seems to be, that in such men, the pleasures which they receive from beautiful objects, engross the attention too much to allow the judgment to operate coolly; and the mind is disposed to dwell passively on its own enjoyment, without indulging a speculative curiosity in analysing its sources. In all our perceptions, from the grossest to the most refined, the attention is directed to the *effect* or to the *cause*, according to the vivacity or to the faintness of the sensation. "If I lay my hand" (says Dr Reid) "gently on the table, and am asked *what I feel*, I na-" turally answer, that *I feel the table*; if I strike it against " the same object with such violence as to receive a painful " sensation from the blow, I as naturally answer the same " question, by saying, that *I feel pain in my hand.*" A similar

observation may be applied to the pleasures which are derived from objects of Taste. Where these pleasures rise to extasy, they produce a state of vague enthusiasm and rapture, in which our reasoning faculties have little share: where they are more moderate and sober, they rouse the curiosity, like other physical effects; and create insensibly those habits of observation, of comparison, and of intellectual experiment, of which I have endeavoured to shew, in the last Chapter, that the power of Taste is the gradual and slow result.

In proportion, too, as the temper of the mind inclines to extreme sensibility, the casual associations of the individual may be expected to be numerous and lasting; for nothing tends so powerfully to bind the associating tie, as the circumstance of its being originally formed, when the mind was *strongly* agitated by pleasure or by pain. In recollecting any particular occurrence, whether prosperous or adverse, of our past lives, by which we were deeply affected at the moment,—how indelible do we find the impression left on the memory, by the most trifling and accidental details which distinguished the never-to-be-forgotten day on which it happened; and how apt are similar details, if at any time they should present themselves in somewhat of the same combination, to inspire us with gaiety or with sadness, according to the complexion of the event with which they are associated! It is in the same way, that, to a mind tremblingly alive to impressions of beauty, a charm is communicated to whatever

accessories or appendages happen to invest any object of its admiration; accessories which are likely to leave a far less permanent trace in the memory of a more indifferent spectator. The consequence will be, that in a person of the former temper, the cultivation of a correct taste will be a much more difficult task than in one of the latter, and a proportionally greater attention will be requisite, on the part of his instructors, to confine his habitual studies to the most faultless models.

Of the caprices and singularities of judgment to which all men are more or less liable from causes of this sort, but which are more peculiarly incident to men of very warm and lively feelings, no better illustration can be given than a noted fact, which Des Cartes mentions with respect to himself, in one of his letters. "During the whole of his life," (this philosopher tells us) "he had a partiality for persons who squinted;" and he adds, that "in his endeavour to trace the cause of a taste ap-"parently so whimsical, he at last recollected, that when a "boy, he had been fond of a girl who had that blemish." "The affection he had for this object of his first love," (says Malebranche) "seems to have diffused itself to all others who "any way resembled her." Hence the disposition which young and susceptible minds discover so frequently, to copy the peculiarities in dress, pronunciation and manner, of those they admire or are attached to; the agreeable impressions associated in their fancy with every thing which marks the in-

dividual the most strongly to the eye or the ear, leading them to conclude very rashly, that, by an imitation of circumstances which are to themselves so characteristical and expressive, they cannot fail to secure a similar charm to their own exterior. Among the ancients, we are told by Plutarch, there were many who imitated the stuttering of Aristotle, and the wry neck of Alexander; nor has this strong bias of our nature escaped the all-observant eye of Shakespeare:

——— "He was indeed the glass
"Wherein the noble youth did dress themselves.
"He had no legs that practis'd not his gait;
"And speaking thick, which nature made his blemish,
"Became the accents of the valiant."

Hence too, the effect of those writers, who unite with any transcendent excellencies, some affected peculiarities of manner or style, in misleading and corrupting the taste of their contemporaries. "How many great qualities" (says Mr Smith) "must that writer possess, who can thus render his "very faults agreeable! After the praise of refining the taste "of a nation, the highest eulogy, perhaps, which can be be-"stowed on any author, is to say that he corrupted it." Proceeding on the same idea, Dr Johnson remarks, very justly and pertinently, that "if there is any writer whose genius "can embellish impropriety, or whose authority can make "error venerable, *his* works are the proper objects of critical "inquisition."—It is hardly necessary for me to add, that the

business of the critic, in such cases, is to break asunder the casual associations which an unreflecting admiration of genius has established in the public judgment; and that, in proportion to the degree of sensibility and enthusiasm which accompanies this admiration in the mind of any individual, will be the difficulty of the task which the critic has to perform.

The foregoing observations seem sufficiently to shew, not only that a sensibility to beauty does not necessarily imply the power of taste; but that, in a mind where the degree of sensibility is extreme, the acquisition of a correct taste is, in ordinary cases, next to impossible. Such a mind may indeed be conceived to have been so circumstanced, as to have been conversant alone with the best models; or it may be so fortified by habits of philosophical study as to resist the influence of casual associations, even when it feels their force; but these cases occur so seldom, that the exceptions rather confirm than weaken the truth of the general conclusion.

Neither is it, perhaps, in minds where sensibility forms the principal feature, that the utmost *delicacy* of taste is to be looked for. The more prominent beauties of the object are apt to engross the whole soul, and to divert the attention, not only from its defects, but from those nicer touches which characterize the finer shades and gradations of art.—On the other hand, it is a self-evident truth, that where there is *no sensibility*, there can be *no taste*; and that even where sensibility is

not altogether wanting, it may exist in a degree so very trifling, as not to afford a sufficient inducement or motive for the cultivation of those habits by which taste is formed. There exists, therefore, a certain measure of sensibility, which at once predisposes the mind to the cultivation of taste, and constitutes an aptitude for its acquisition; such a measure of it, as renders that class of our pleasures with which taste is conversant, an interesting object of examination and study; while, on the other hand, it does not rise so high as to discourage habits of observation and analysis, or to overpower the judgment, by lending irresistible force to casual combinations.

In the practical application, however, of this conclusion, it is of essential consequence to remember, that the degree of sensibility must always be estimated *relatively* to the state of those intellectual powers with which it is combined. A degree of sensibility which a man of vigorous understanding knows how to regulate and to controul, may, in a weaker mind, not only become a source of endless inconvenience and error, but may usurp the mastery of all its faculties. The truth of this remark is daily exemplified in that sort of sensibility which is affected by the pleasures and pains of human life; and it will be found to hold equally with respect to the feelings which enter as elementary principles into the composition of Taste.

## CHAPTER FOURTH.

CONTINUATION OF THE SUBJECT.—SPECIFIC PLEASURE CONNECTED WITH THE EXERCISE OF TASTE.—FASTIDIOUSNESS OF TASTE.—MISCELLANEOUS REMARKS ON THIS POWER, CONSIDERED IN ITS CONNECTION WITH CHARACTER AND HAPPINESS.

BEFORE I quit this part of the subject, it is important for me to add, that, in proportion as taste is cultivated and matured, there arises *a secondary pleasure peculiar to this acquired power*; a pleasure essentially distinct from those *primary pleasures* which its appropriate objects afford. A man of strong sensibility, but destitute of taste, while he enjoys the beauties of a poem or a picture, will receive no positive uneasiness from the concomitant details which may diminish or obstruct the pleasing effect. To a person, on the contrary, of a cultivated

taste, *these* will necessarily appear offensive blemishes, betraying a want of skill and judgment in the author; while, on the other hand, supposing them to have been avoided, and the genuine principles of beauty to have been exhibited pure and unadulterated, there would have been superadded to the pleasures operating on his natural sensibility, the acquired gratification, of remarking the taste as well as genius displayed in the performance.

It is, however, in a very small number, comparatively speaking, of individuals, that taste is the native growth of the original principles and unborrowed habits of their own minds. In by far the greater proportion of men, what usurps that name, and is too frequently acknowledged as having a right to assume it, consists merely of a prompt application of certain technical rules, which pass current in the common circles of fashion or of literature; and which are adopted by the multitude, without the slightest examination, as incontrovertible axioms. Such, for example, is that mechanical and pedantic taste which is imbibed passively on the authority of Aristotle or of Bossu, and which may, in general, be distinguished by a fluent command of that convenient and imposing phraseology, which is called by Sterne "the cant of criticism."

These technical rules, at the same time, although often

abused, are not without their value; for, although they can never supply the want of natural sensibility, or inspire a relish for beauty in a mind insensible to it before, they may yet point out many of the *faults* which an artist ought to avoid, and teach those critics how to censure, who are incapable of being taught how to admire. They may even communicate to such a critic, some degree of that *secondary pleasure* which was formerly mentioned as *peculiar to taste;* the pleasure of remarking the coincidence between the execution of an artist, and the established rules of his art; or, if he should himself aspire to be an artist, they may enable him to produce what will not much offend, if it should fail to please. What is commonly called *fastidiousness of taste,* is an affectation chiefly observable in persons of this description; being the natural effect of habits of common-place criticism on an eye blind to the perception of the beautiful. Instances, at the same time, may be conceived, in which this fastidiousness is real; arising from an unfortunate predominance of the secondary pleasures and pains, peculiar to taste, over those primary pleasures and pains which the object is fitted to produce. But this, I apprehend, is a case that can rarely occur in a mind possessed of common sensibility; more especially, if the cultivation of taste has been confined to that subordinate place which belongs to it, among the various other pursuits to which we are led by the speculative and active principles of our nature.

The result of these observations is, that the utmost to be expected from rules of criticism is a *technical correctness of taste*; meaning by that phrase, a power of judging, how far the artist has conformed himself to the established and acknowledged canons of his art, without any perception of those nameles excellencies, which have hitherto eluded the grasp of verbal description.

There is another species of Taste, (unquestionably of a higher order than the technical taste we have now been considering) which is insensibly acquired by a diligent and habitual study of the most approved and consecrated standards of excellence; and which, in pronouncing its critical judgments, is secretly, and often unconsciously guided, by an idolatrous comparison of what it sees, with the works of its favourite masters. This, I think, approaches nearly to what La Bruyere calls *le Gout de Comparaison*. It is that kind of taste which commonly belongs to the *counoisseur* in painting; and to which something perfectly analogous may be remarked in all the other fine arts.

A person possessed of this sort of taste, if he should be surpassed in the correctness of his judgment by the technical critic, is much more likely to recognize the beauties of a new work, by their resemblance to those which are familiar to his memory; or, if he should himself attempt the task of execu-

tion, and possesses powers equal to the task, he may possibly, without any clear conception of his own merits, rival the originals he has been accustomed to admire. It was said by an ancient critic, that, in reading Seneca, it was impossible not to wish, that he had written "with the taste of ano-"ther person, though with his own genius;"—*suo ingenio, alieno judicio* *;—and we find, in fact, that many who have failed as original writers, have seemed to surpass themselves, when they attempted to imitate. Warburton has remarked, and, in my opinion, with some truth, that Burke himself never wrote so well, as when he imitated Bolingbroke. If on other occasions, he has soared higher than in his *Vindication of Natural Society*, he has certainly nowhere else (I speak at present merely of the *style* of his composition) sustained himself so long upon a steady wing. I do not, however, agree with Warburton in thinking, that this implied any defect in Mr Burke's genius, connected with that faculty of *imitation* which he so eminently possessed. The defect lay in his Taste, which, when left to itself, without the guidance of an acknowledged standard of excellence, appears not only to have been warped by some peculiar notions concerning the art of writing; but to have been too wavering and versatile, to keep his imagination and his fancy (stimulated as they were by an ostentation of his intellectual riches, and by an

* Velles cum suo ingenio dixisse, alieno judicio.—Quinct. Lib. x. cap. 1.

ambition of Asiatic ornament) under due controul. With the composition of Bolingbroke present to his thoughts, he has shewn with what ease he could equal its most finished beauties; while, on more than one occasion, a consciousness of his own strength has led him to display his superiority, by brandishing, in his sport, still heavier weapons than his master was able to wield.

To one or other of these two classes, the taste of most professed critics will be found to belong; and it is evident, that they may both exist, where there is little or no sensibility to Beauty. That genuine and native Taste, the origin and growth of which I attempted to describe in the last chapter, is perhaps one of the rarest acquisitions of the human mind: nor will this appear surprising to those who consider with attention, the combination of original qualities which it implies; the accidental nature of many of the circumstances which must conspire to afford due opportunities for its improvement; and the persevering habits of discriminating observation by which it is formed. It occurs, indeed, in its most perfect state, as seldom as originality of genius; and, when united with industry, and with moderate powers of execution, it will go farther, in such an age as the present, to secure success in the arts with which it is conversant, than the utmost fertility of invention, where the taste is unformed or perverted.

With respect to this *native* or *indigenous* Taste, it is particularly worthy of observation, that it is always more strongly disposed to the enjoyment of *Beauties*, than to the detection of *Blemishes*. It is, indeed, by a quick and lively perception of the former, accompanied with a spirit of candour and indulgence towards the latter, that its existence in the mind of any individual is most unequivocally marked. It is this perception which can alone evince that sensibility of temperament, of which a certain portion, although it does not of itself constitute Taste, is nevertheless the first and most essential element in its composition; while it evinces, at the same time, those habits of critical observation and cool reflection, which, allowing no impression, how slight soever, to pass unnoticed, seem to awaken a new sense of Beauty, and to *create* that delicacy of feeling which they only *disclose*. We are told of Saunderson, the blind mathematician, that in a series of Roman medals, he could distinguish by his hand the true from the counterfeit, with a more unerring discrimination than the eye of a professed Virtuoso; and we are assured by his biographer, Mr Colson, that when he was present at the astronomical observations in the garden of his college, he was accustomed to remark every cloud that passed over the sun. The effect of the blindness of this extraordinary person was not surely to produce any organical change in his other perceptive powers. It served only to quicken his attention to those slighter perceptions of touch, which are overlooked by men to whom

they convey no useful information. The case I conceive to be perfectly analogous in matters which fall under the cognizance of intellectual taste. Where nature has denied all sensibility to beauty, no study or instruction can supply the defect; but it may be possible, nevertheless, by awakening the attention to things neglected before, to develope a latent sensibility where none was suspected to exist. In all men, indeed, without exception, whether their natural sensibility be strong or weak, it is by such habits of attention alone to the finer feelings of their own minds, that the power of taste can acquire all the delicacy of which it is susceptible.

While this cultivated sensibility enlarges so widely to the man who possesses it the pleasures of Taste, it has a tendency, wherever it is gratified and delighted in a high degree, to avert his critical eye from blemishes and imperfections;—not because he is unable to remark them, but because he can appretiate the merits by which they are redeemed, and loves to enjoy the beauties in which they are lost. A Taste thus awake to the Beautiful seizes eagerly on every touch of genius with the sympathy of kindred affection; and, in the secret consciousness of a congenial inspiration, shares, in some measure, the triumph of the Artist. The faults which have escaped him, it views with the partiality of friendship; and willingly abandons the censorial office to those who exult in the errors of superior minds as their appropriate and easy prey.

Nor is this indulgent spirit towards the works of others, at all inconsistent with the most rigid severity in an author towards his own. On the contrary, both are the natural consequences of that discriminating power of taste, on which I have already enlarged as one of its most important characteristics. Where men of little discernment attend only to general effects, confounding beauties and blemishes, flowers and weeds, in one gross and undistinguishing perception, a man of quick sensibility and cultivated judgment, detaches, in a moment, the one from other; rejects, in imagination, whatever is offensive in the prospect, and enjoys without alloy what is fitted to please. His taste, in the meantime, is refined and confirmed by the exercise: and, while it multiplies the sources of his gratification in proportion to the latent charms which it detects, becomes itself, as the arbiter and guide of his own genius, more scrupulous and inflexible than before.

"The tragedy of Douglas" (says Gray in one of his letters) "has infinite faults; but there is one scene (that between "Matilda and the old Peasant,) so masterly, that it strikes me "blind to all the defects of the piece." These, I apprehend, are the natural impressions of genuine taste in pronouncing on the merits of works of genuine excellence; impressions, however, which they who are conscious of them have not always the candour either to indulge or to avow.—Such, also, was the feeling which dictated a memorable precept of La Bruyere,

of which I will not impair the force, by attempting a translation: "Quand une lecture vous élève l'esprit, et qu'elle vous "inspire des sentimens nobles et courageux, ne cherchez pas "une autre règle pour juger de l'Ouvrage; il est bon, et fait "de main d'Ouvrier."—How different both sentiments from that fastidiousnes of Taste, by an affectation of which it is usual for little minds to court the reputation of superior refinement *!

In producing, however, this fastidiousness, whether affected or real, various *moral* causes,—such as jealousy, rivalship, personal dislike, or the spleen of conscious inferiority,—may conspire with the *intellectual* defects which have been mentioned: Nay, the same moral causes may be conceived to be so powerful in their influence, as to produce this unfortunate effect, in spite of every intellectual gift which nature and education can bestow. It is observed by Shenstone, that "good taste and "good-nature are inseparably united;" and, although the observation is by no means true when thus stated as an unqualified proposition, it will be found to have a sufficient foundation in fact, to deserve the attention of those who have a pleasure in studying the varieties of human character. One thing is certain, that as a habitual deficiency in good humour

* Note (Q q).

is sufficient to warp the decisions of the soundest taste, so the taste of an individual, in proportion as it appears to be free from capricious biasses, affords a strong presumption, that the temper is unsuspicious, open, and generous. As the habits, besides, which contribute spontaneously to the formation of taste, all originate in the desire of intellectual gratification, this power, where it is possessed in an eminent degree, may be regarded as a symptom of that general disposition to be pleased and happy, in which the essence of good-nature consists. "In those vernal seasons of the year," (says Milton, in one of the finest sentences of his prose-writings) "when the air is soft and pleasant, it were an injury and sul-"lenness against nature, not to go out and see her riches, and "partake of her rejoicings with heaven and earth."—Such is the temper of mind by which, in our early years, those habits which form the ground-work of taste are most likely to be formed; and such, precisely, is the temper which, in our intercourse with our fellow-creatures, disposes us, both for their sakes and for our own, to view their actions and characters on the fairest side. I need scarcely add, in confirmation of some remarks formerly made, that the same temper, when transferred from the observation of nature to the study of the fine arts, can scarcely fail to incline the taste more strongly to the side of admiration than of censure.

After all, however, maxims of this sort must necessarily be

understood as liable to many exceptions. The love of nature itself, even when accompanied with that general benevolence towards our own species with which it is in youth invariably attended, is not always united with that good humour towards individuals, to which it seems so nearly allied in theory, and with which it is, in fact, so closely connected, in a great majority of instances: Nay, this love of nature sometimes continues undiminished in men, who, in consequence of disappointed hopes and expectations, have contracted a decided tendency to misanthropy. It is not therefore surprising, that an enthusiastic admiration of *natural beauty* should *occasionally* meet in the same person, with a cold and splenetic taste in the fine arts; at least in instances where the productions of the present times are to be judged of. But such exceptions do not invalidate the truth of the general proposition, any more than of every other general conclusion relative to human character. Their explanation is to be sought for in the accidental history of individual minds; and, when successfully investigated, will constantly be found (supposing our results to be cautiously drawn from a comprehensive survey of human life) to lend additional evidence to the very rules which they seem, at first view, to contradict.

One very obvious consideration furnishes, of itself, in the case now before us, a key to some apparent inconsistencies in the reflections which I have already hazarded. In such

maxims concerning Taste, as that which I have quoted from Shenstone, due attention is seldom paid to the diversified appearances it exhibits, according to the two very different purposes for which it may be exercised; First, as a principle in the artist's mind, regulating and directing the exertions of his own genius; and Secondly, as a principle in the mind of the critic, who judges of the works produced by the genius of another. In the former case, where none of the moral causes by which taste is most liable to be warped have any room to operate, it cannot be denied, that it is sometimes displayed in no inconsiderable degree (although, I believe, never in its highest perfection) by individuals, in whose characters neither good humour nor any other amiable quality is at all conspicuous. In the latter case, an habitual justice and mildness in its decisions, more particularly where works of contemporary genius are in question, is an infallible test of the absence of those selfish partialities and peevish jealousies, which encroach so deeply on the happiness of many, whom nature has distinguished by the most splendid endowments; and which, wherever they are allowed to operate, are equally fatal to the head and to the heart.

It is a melancholy fact with respect to artists of all classes; painters, poets, orators, and eloquent writers; that a large proportion of those who have evinced the soundest and the surest taste in their own productions, have yet appeared to-

tally destitute of this power, when they have assumed the office of critics. How is this to be accounted for, but by the influence of bad passions (unsuspected probably by themselves) in blinding or jaundicing their critical eye? In truth, it is only when the mind is perfectly serene, that the decisions of taste can be relied on. In these nicest of all operations of the intellect, where the grounds of judgment are often so shadowy and complicated, the latent sources of error are numberless; and to guard against them, it is necessary that no circumstance, however trifling, should occur, either to discompose the feelings, or to mislead the understanding.

Among our English poets, who is more vigorous, correct, and polished than Dr Johnson, in the few poetical compositions which he has left? Whatever may be thought of his claims to originality of genius, no person who reads his verses can deny, that he possessed a sound taste in this species of composition; and yet, how wayward and perverse in many instances, are his decisions when he sits in judgment on a political adversary, or when he treads on the ashes of a departed rival! To myself (much as I admire his great and various merits, both as a critic and as a writer), human nature never appears in a more humiliating form, than when I read his *Lives of the Poets;* a performance which exhibits a more faithful, expressive, and curious picture of the author, than all the portraits attempted by his biographers; and

which, in this point of view, compensates fully by the *moral* lessons it may suggest, for the *critical* errors which it sanctions. The errors, alas! are not such as any one who has perused his imitations of Juvenal can place to the account of a bad taste; but such as had their root in weaknesses, which a noble mind would be still more unwilling to acknowledge.

If these observations are well-founded, they seem to render it somewhat doubtful, whether, in the different arts, the most successful adventurers are likely to prove, in matters of criticism, the safest guides; although Pope appears to have considered the censorial authority as their exclusive prerogative.

> "Let such teach others, who themselves excel,
> "And censure freely who have written well."

That the maxim is founded in good sense, as long as the artist confines himself to general critical precepts, or to the productions of other times, I do not mean at present to dispute; although even on this point I entertain some doubts. But, in estimating the merits of a contemporary candidate for fame, how seldom do we meet with an artist, whose decisions are dictated by taste alone, without a palpable admixture of caprice or of passion; and how often have we, on such occasions, to lament that oracular contempt of public opinion and public feeling, which conscious superiority is too apt to inspire! Other

causes, besides, of a much more secret and obscure nature than these moral weaknesses, co-operate powerfully in producing the same effect. Such, for example, are the biasses, originating in casual and inexplicable associations, which, in powerful, but limited minds, are frequently identified with the characteristical *stamina* of genius; furnishing matter of wonder and of pity to others, whose intellectual features are less strongly marked by individual peculiarities.—" Thomson " has lately published a poem called *the Castle of Indolence*, in " which there are some good stanzas." Who could have expected this sentence from the pen of Gray? In an ordinary critic, possessed of one hundredth part of Gray's sensibility and taste, such total indifference to the beauties of this exquisite performance, would be utterly impossible *.

But I will not multiply illustrations on a topic so peculiarly ungrateful. The hints which I have already thrown out, are, I hope, sufficient to lead the thoughts of my younger readers to those practical reflections which they were intended to suggest. They have, indeed, but little originality to boast of;

* *La Bruyere* (according to the usual practice of writers of maxims) has pushed this train of thinking to an extreme, in order to give more point to his apothegm. Yet there is some truth, as well as wit, in the following sentences:

" Si une belle femme approuve la beauté d'une autre femme, on peut conclure qu'elle " a mieux que ce qu'elle approuve. Si un poete loue les vers d'un autre poete, il y a " à parier qu'ils sont mauvais et sans conséquence."

but they point at some sources of false taste, overlooked in our common systems of criticism; and which, however compatible with many of the rarest and most precious gifts of the understanding, are inconsistent with that unclouded reason, that unperverted sensibility, and that unconquerable candour, which mark a comprehensive, an upright, and an elevated mind.

When Æschines, after his retreat to Rhodes, was, one day, reading aloud to some friends, the oration περι στεφανου, which had occasioned his exile; and when his hearers were lost in wonder at the eloquence of Demosthenes;—"What (said he) "would you have thought, if you had heard *him* pronounce "it?"—Such is the language (if I may borrow the words of Mr Gibbon) "in which one great man should speak of ano-"ther;" and which they who are truly great will feel a peculiar pleasure to employ, when the well-merited fame of an adversary is in question. Nor is this magnanimity without its reward in the judgment of the world. Where is the individual to be found, who, in reading the foregoing story of Æschines, does not envy the feelings he enjoyed at that proud moment of his life, far more than the palm of eloquence which he yielded to his enemy *?

*——"Quo mihi melius etiam illud ab Æschine dictum videri solet, qui cùm "propter ignominiam judicii cessisset Athenis, et se Rhodum contulisset, rogatus à "Rhodiis, legisse fertur orationem illam egregiam, quam in Ctesiphontem contra.

Why do not men of superior talents, if they should not always aspire to the praise of a candour so heroic, strive at least, for the honour of the arts which they love, to conceal their ignoble jealousies from the malignity of those, whom incapacity and mortified pride have leagued together, as the covenanted foes of worth and genius? What a triumph has been furnished to the writers who delight in levelling all the proud distinctions of Humanity; and what a stain has been left on some of the fairest pages of our literary history, by the irritable passions and petty hostilities of Pope and of Addison!

The complete forgetfulness of every selfish passion (so beautifully exemplified in the anecdote of Æschines) when the mind is agitated by the enthusiasm of admiration;—the sympathetic identification which then takes place of the hearer or reader with the author, was probably what Longinus felt, when he observed, in his account of the Sublime, that "it fills "the mind with a glorying and sense of inward greatness, as "if it had itself conceived what it has only heard." If the remark should be censured as out of place, when introduced into his statement of the characteristics of Sublimity, it must, at least, be allowed to be happily descriptive of that temper and

"Demosthenem dixerat: qua perlecta, petitum est ab eo postridie, ut legeret illam "etiam, quæ erat contrà à Demosthene pro Ctesiphonte edita: quam cum suavissima "et maxima voce legisset, admirantibus omnibus, Quanto, inquit, magis admiraremi- "ni, si audissetis ipsum!"—Cic. de Orat. Lib. III.

frame which are essential to its complete enjoyment.—" Voilà " le sublime ! Voilà son véritable caractère!" is said to have been the exclamation of the great Condé, when Boileau read to him his translation of the above passage.

Having been insensibly led into these reflections on some of the moral defects by which taste is liable to be injured, I cannot help quoting, before I close this view of my subject, a remark of Sir Joshua Reynolds (not altogether unconnected with it), which appears to me equally refined and just. " The same habit of mind" (he observes) " which is acquired " by our *search after truth* in the more serious duties of life, " is, in matters of taste, only trasnferred to the pursuit of " lighter amusements. The same disposition, the same de- " sire to find something steady, substantial and durable, on " which the mind *can lean as it were*, and rest with safety. " The subject only is changed. We pursue the same me- " thod in our search after the idea of beauty and perfec- " tion in each; of virtue, by looking forwards beyond our- " selves, to society and to the whole; of arts, by extending " our views in the same manner to all ages and all times." In farther illustration of the same idea he observes, " that " the real substance of what goes under the name of taste is " fixed and established in the nature of things; that there " are certain and regular causes by which the imagination " and passions of men are affected; and that the knowledge " of these causes is acquired by a laborious and diligent in-

" vestigation of nature, and by the same slow process as wis-
" dom or knowledge of every kind."—I would only add, (by way of limitation) that these observations apply rather to that quality of taste which is denoted by the words *justness* or *soundness*, than to its *sensibility* and *delicacy*; which last circumstances seem to depend, in no inconsiderable degree, on original temperament. The former is unquestionably connected very closely with *the love of truth*, and with what is perhaps only the same thing under a different form, *simplicity of character*.

If the account be just which has now been given, of the process by which Taste is formed, and of the various faculties and habits which contribute their share to its composition, we may reasonably expect, where it exists in its highest perfection, to find an understanding, discriminating, comprehensive, and unprejudiced; united with a love of truth and of nature, and with a temper superior to the irritation of little passions. While it implies a spirit of accurate observation and of patient induction, applied to the most fugitive and evanescent class of our mental phenomena, it evinces that power of separating universal associations from such as are local or personal, which, more than any other quality of the mind, is the foundation of *good sense*, both in scientific pursuits, and in the conduct of life. The intellectual efforts by which such a taste is formed are, in reality, much more nearly

allied than is commonly suspected, to those which are employed in prosecuting the most important and difficult branches of the philosophy of the human mind.

Nor am I inclined to think, that this conclusion will, on examination, appear inconsistent with fact. That a *partial* taste, confined to some particular art, such as music, painting, or even poetry, may be often found united with an intellect which does not rise above the common level, I very readily grant; although I think it questionable, whether, in such an intellect, supposing example and imitation to be altogether out of the question, even a partial taste of this kind could have been originally formed. But the fair test of the soundness of the foregoing reasonings is an instance, in which the good taste of the individual has been the fruit of his own exertions; and in which it extends, more or less, to all the arts which he has made the objects of his study, and which nature has not denied him, by some organical defect in his original constitution, a capacity of enjoying. Where a good taste has been *thus* formed, I am fully persuaded, that the inferences which I have supposed to follow with respect to the other intellectual powers involved in its composition, will be justified, in all their extent, by an appeal to experience.

The subject might be prosecuted much farther, by examin-

ing the *varieties of taste* in connection with the *varieties of human character*. In studying the latter, whether our object be to seize the intellectual or the moral features of the mind, the former will be found to supply as useful and steady a light as any that we can command. To myself it appears to furnish the strongest of them all; more particularly, where the finer and more delicate shades of character are in question.—But the illustration of this remark belongs to some speculations which I destine for a different work.

# ESSAY FOURTH.

## ON THE CULTURE OF CERTAIN INTELLECTUAL HABITS CONNECTED WITH THE FIRST ELEMENTS OF TASTE.

## CHAPTER FIRST.

### DEPENDENCE OF TASTE ON A RELISH FOR THE PLEASURES OF IMAGINATION.—REMARKS ON THE PREVAILING IDEA, THAT THESE ARE TO BE ENJOYED IN PERFECTION, IN YOUTH ALONE.

In what I have hitherto said with respect to Taste, I have considered it chiefly as the native growth of the individual mind to which it belongs; endeavouring to trace it to its first principles or seeds in our intellectual frame. In cases, however, where nature has not been so liberal as to render the formation of this power possible, *merely* from the mind's own internal resources, much may be done by judicious culture in early life; and in all cases whatever, in such a state

of society as ours, its growth, even when most completely spontaneous, cannot fail to be influenced, in a greater or less degree, by instruction, by imitation, by the contagion of example, and by various other adventitious causes.

It is reasonable also to believe, that there are numberless minds, in which the seeds of taste, though profusely sown, continue altogether dormant through life; either in consequence of a total want of opportunity to cultivate the habits by which it is to be matured, or of an attention completely engrossed with other pursuits. In instances such as these, it is the province of education to lend her succour; to invigorate, by due exercise, those principles in which an original weakness may be suspected; and, by removing the obstacles which check the expansion of our powers in any of the directions in which nature disposes them to shoot, to enable her to accomplish and to perfect her own designs.

To suggest practical rules for this important purpose would be inconsistent with the limits of a short Essay; and I shall, therefore, confine myself to a few slight hints with respect to some of the more essential propositions on which such rules must proceed.

Before I enter on this subject, it is necessary to pre-

mise, that my aim is *not* to explain how a vitiated or false taste in any of the fine arts may be corrected; or in what manner an imperfect taste may be trained by culture to a state of higher refinement; but to inquire, in the case of an individual, whose thoughts have hitherto been totally engrossed with other pursuits, how far it may be possible, by engaging his attention to a new class of pleasures, to bring his mind into that track of observation and study, by the steady pursuit of which alone (as I have already endeavoured to shew) the power of taste is to be gradually and slowly formed. In prosecuting this speculation, I shall have a view more particularly to that species of Taste which has for its object the beauties of external nature, whether presented directly to the senses, or recalled to the imagination, with the modifications and heightenings of poetical or creative invention. Without some portion of *this* taste, while an essential blank is left in the circle of his most refined enjoyments, the intellectual frame of man is incomplete and mutilated; and, although the fact be undoubtedly the same, more or less, with a taste in music, in painting, in architecture and various other arts, the difference in point of degree is so immense, as to render the effects unsusceptible of comparison. Nor is this all. The transition from a Taste for the *beautiful*, to that more comprehensive Taste which extends to all the other pleasures of which poetical fiction is the vehicle, is easy and infallible; and accordingly we shall find, as we proceed in our argument, the

subject to which it relates swell insensibly in its dimensions, and branch out, on every side, into numberles ramifications. The hints, therefore, which I am now to suggest, limited as some of them may appear to be in their immediate scope, may, perhaps, contribute to direct into the right path, such of my readers as may aim at conclusions more general than mine. In the mean time, I must beg leave to remind them, that amid such an infinity of aspects, as the *objects and the principle of taste* present to our curiosity, a selection of the happiest points of view is all that is possible; and that, in fixing upon these, I must necessarily be guided by the intimacy of that relation, which they seem to myself to bear to the Philosophy of the Human Mind.

I have observed, in a former work, that what is commonly called *sensibility* depends, in a great measure, on the state of the *imagination* *. In the passage to which I allude, my remark has a more peculiar reference to *moral sensibility*, or to what may be called, for the sake of distinction, *the sensibility of the heart*. But it will be found to apply also with great force (although I acknowledge, not without some limitations) to the *sensibility of taste*. In so far as the pleasures of Taste depend on *association*; on the perception of *uses or fitnesses*; on sympathy with *the enjoyments of animated beings*, or on other circumstances of a similar nature, the remark will, I appre-

* Philosophy of the Human Mind, p. 509, 3d edit.

hend, apply literally; and it only fails with respect to those *organical* pleasures (the pleasures, for example, depending on the sensibility of the eye to colours, and of the ear to musical tones) over which the imagination cannot be supposed to have much influence. But, that these organical pleasures, although the *parent stock* on which all our more complicated feelings of Beauty are afterwards grafted, as well as *the means* by which the various exciting causes of these feelings are united and consolidated under the same common appellation; —that these organical pleasures, I say, form by far the most inconsiderable part of that general impression or effect which is produced by the objects of taste on a cultivated mind, has, I trust, been already sufficiently shewn.

The *sensibility* of taste, therefore (we may conclude) depends chiefly, in the mind of any individual, on the associations and other intellectual processes connected with the objects about which taste is conversant; and, consequently, the only effectual means of developing *this* sensibility, (the most essential of all the elements of taste, and indeed the seminal principle of the whole) must begin with the culture of Imagination.

With respect to this last power, it may contribute to the clearness of some of the following reasonings, to premise, that although, according to the idea of it which I en-

deavoured formerly to illustrate *, its most distinguishing characteristic is a faculty of creation, (or, to speak more correctly, of invention and of new combination) yet, when considered in its relation to Taste, this inventive faculty is the least important ingredient in its composition. All that is essentially necessary is a capacity of seizing, and comprehending, and presenting in a lively manner to one's own mind, whatever combinations are formed by the imagination of others. When such combinations have for their materials, *nothing* but what is borrowed from sensible objects, this capacity differs so little from what I before called Conception†, that if I had been to confine myself to these exclusively, I should not have wished for any other word to convey my meaning at present. As, in other parts of my writings, however, imagination is commonly to be understood in the most enlarged sense, as possessing a sway over the intellectual and moral worlds as well as over the material, an expression of more comprehensive import than Conception may be sometimes convenient; and I shall therefore, for want of a better phrase, avail myself of the epithet *apprehensive*, to distinguish that modification of imagination which is subservient to taste, from that *inventive* or *creative* imagination, which forms the chief element in poetical genius.

* Philosophy of the Human Mind. † Ibid.

Notwithstanding, however, the justness of this theoretical distinction, I shall seldom, if ever, have occasion, in the sequel of this volume, to employ the epithets which I have now proposed to introduce. The transition from the *apprehensive* to the *inventive* operations of imagination, appears to me to be, in reality, much simpler and easier than is commonly suspected: in other words, I conceive, that where the mind has been early and familiarly conversant with the fictions of poetry, the acquisition of that inventive or creative faculty which characterizes the poet, depends, in a great measure, on the individual himself; supposing that there exists no extraordinary deficiency in his other intellectual capacities.—In what remains, therefore, of this Essay, I shall make use of the word Imagination, without any epithet whatever; premising only in general, that it is the *apprehensive* power of imagination, and not its *inventive* power, which I have solely in view, when I speak of its culture as an important object of education.

In what manner Imagination may be encouraged and cherished in a mind where it had previously made little appearance, may be easily conceived from what was stated in a former Essay, with respect to the peculiar charm which sometimes accompanies the pleasures produced by its ideal combinations, when compared with the corresponding realities in nature and in human life. The eager curiosity of childhood, and the boundless gratification which it is so easy to afford it by

well-selected works of fiction, give, in fact, to education, a stronger *purchase*, if I may use the expression, over this faculty, than what it possesses over any other. The attention may be thus insensibly seduced from the present objects of the senses, and the thoughts accustomed to dwell on the past, the distant, or the future; and, in the same proportion in which this effect is in any instance accomplished, "*the man*" (as Dr Johnson has justly remarked) "is exalted in the scale of in-" tellectual being." The tale of fiction will probably be soon laïd aside with the toys and rattles of infancy; but the habits which it has contributed to fix, and the powers which it has brought into a state of activity, will remain with the possessor, permanent and inestimable treasures, to his latest hour. To myself, this appears the most solid advantage to be gained from fictitious composition, considered as an engine of early instruction; I mean, the attractions which it holds out for encouraging an intercourse with the authors best fitted to invigorate and enrich the imagination, and to quicken whatever is dormant in the sensibility to beauty: or, to express myself still more plainly, the value of the incidents seems to me to arise chiefly, from their tendency to entice the young reader into that fairy-land of poetry, where the scenes of romance are laid.——Nor is it to the young alone that I would confine these observations exclusively. Instances have frequently occurred of individuals, in whom the Power of Imagination has, at a more advanced period of life, been found

susceptible of culture to a wonderful degree. In such men, what an accession is gained to their most refined pleasures! What enchantments are added to their most ordinary perceptions! The mind awakening, as if from a trance, to a new existence, becomes habituated to the most interesting aspects of life and of nature; the intellectual eye is "purged of its "film;" and things the most familiar and unnoticed, disclose charms invisible before. The same objects and events which were *lately beheld with indifference, occupy now all the* powers and capacities of the soul; the contrast between the present and the past serving only to enhance and to endear so unlooked-for an acquisition. What Gray has so finely said of the *pleasures of vicissitude*, conveys but a faint image of what is experienced by the man, who, after having lost in vulgar occupations and vulgar amusements, his earliest and most precious years, is thus introduced at last to a new heaven and a new earth:

"The meanest flowret of the vale,
"The simplest note that swells the gale,
"The common sun, the air, the skies,
"To him are op'ning Paradise."

The effects of foreign travel have been often remarked, not only in rousing the curiosity of the traveller while abroad, but in correcting, after his return, whatever habits of inattention he had contracted to the institutions and manners among

which he was bred. It is in a way somewhat analogous, that our occasional excursions into the regions of imagination increase our interest in those familiar realities from which the stores of imagination are borrowed. We learn insensibly to view nature with the eye of the painter and of the poet, and to seize those "happy attitudes of things" which their taste at first selected; while, enriched with the accumulations of ages, and with "the spoils of time," we unconsciously combine with what we see, all that we know and all that we feel; and sublime the organical beauties of the material world, by blending with them the inexhaustible delights of the heart and of the fancy.

And here, may I be allowed to recommend, in a more particular manner, the pleasures of imagination to such of my readers, as have hitherto been wholly engrossed with the tudy of the severer sciences, or who have been hurried, at too early a period, into active and busy life? Abstracting from the tendency which a relish for these pleasures obviously has to adorn the more solid acquisitions of the one class, and to ennoble, with liberality and light, the habits of the other, they may both be assured, that it will open to them sources of enjoyment hitherto inexperienced, and communicate the exercise of powers of which they are yet unconscious. It was said, with truth, by Charles the Twelfth of Sweden, that he who was ignorant of the arithmetical art was but *half a*

*man ;—un homme à demi.* With how much greater force may a similar expression be applied to *him*, who carries to his grave, the neglected and unprofitable seeds of faculties, which it depended on himself to have reared to maturity, and of which the fruits bring accessions to human happiness, more precious than all the gratifications which power or wealth can command ! I speak not of the laborious orders of society, to whom this class of pleasures must, from their condition, be, in a great measure, necessarily denied ; but of men destined for the higher and more independent walks of life, who are too often led, by an ignorance of their own possible attainments, to exhaust all their toil on one little field of study, while they leave, in a state of nature, by far the most valuable portion of the intellectual inheritance to which they were born. If these speculations of mine concerning the powers of the understanding, possess any peculiar or characteristical merit, it arises, in my own opinion, chiefly from their tendency (by affording the student a general knowledge of the treasures which lie within himself, and of the means by which he may convert them to his use and pleasure) to develope, on a greater scale than has been commonly attempted, all the various capacities of the mind. It is by such a plan of study alone, that the intellectual character can attain, in every part, its fair and just proportions ; and we may rest assured, that wherever *these* are distorted from their proper shape or dimensions, the dignity of the man is so far lowered, and

his happiness impaired. It was with these views, chiefly, that I was led to attempt, in another publication, a comprehensive a survey of the principles of human nature as my own acquirements enabled me, however imperfectly, to execute; and it is with the same views, that, in the execution of my design, I have occasionally stopped short at what appeared to myself the most interesting and commanding stations, in order to open to the companions of my journey, such *vistas* on either hand, as might afford them a glimpse of the fertility and beauty of the regions through which they are travelling. This consideration will, I hope, suggest an apology for what may to some appear *digressions* from the principal line of inquiry pursued in that work; as well as for the space which I have allotted, in this volume, to my discussions concerning the objects and the principle of Taste.

To such students as wish to prosecute the philosophy of the human mind, the subject to which these last discussions relate, possesses many additional recommendations. While it affords a pleasing avenue to their favourite department of knowledge, it turns the attention to a very numerous class of phenomena, without a knowledge of which it is impossible to form a just idea, either of the intellectual or moral constitution of human nature. But, what is of far greater consequence to themselves, considered individually, it furnishes (as will appear more fully in the course of some

of my future inquiries) the most effectual of all remedies for those peculiarities of judgment and of feeling, which are the natural consequences of metaphysical pursuits, when indulged in to an excess. In cases where the cultivation of imagination and of taste has been altogether neglected in early life, I would beg leave to recommend the study of philosophical criticism, as the most convenient link for connecting habits of abstract thought with these lighter and more ornamental accomplishments; and, although it would be too much to promise, to a person whose youth has been spent in metaphysical disquisition, that he may yet acquire a complete relish for the intellectual pleasures which he has so long overlooked, he may be confidently assured, that enough is still within his reach, to recompence amply the time and pains employed in its pursuit. Even if little should be gained in point of positive enjoyment, his speculative knowledge of the capacities of the mind, cannot fail to be greatly and usefully enlarged. A sense of his limited powers will produce that diffidence in his own judgment, which is one of the most important lessons of philosophy; and, by engaging his attention to his personal defects, may be expected to render his plans of education, for those who are to come after him, more comprehensive and enlightened than that which was followed by his own instructors.

In thus recommending the study of philosophical criticism

as a preparation for the culture of the arts to which imagination and taste are subservient, I am perfectly sensible that I propose an inversion of what may, in one point of view, be regarded as the order of nature: but, in the instances now in question, the mind is supposed to be in a morbid or mutilated state; and the effect to be produced is the developement of powers and capacities which have never yet been unfolded. In such circumstances, we must necessarily avail ourselves of the aid of such habits as happen to be already formed, in order to call forth whatever faculties and principles are still wanting to complete the intellectual system.

In cases, on the other hand, in which the imagination or the taste may be suspected to have gained an undue ascendant over the other powers of the understanding, the Philosophy of the Human Mind (supposing the attention to be judiciously and skilfully led to it, and the intellectual capacities not to be altogether unequal to the attempt), must necessarily prove the most profitable and interesting of all studies; and for this purpose, that branch of it which relates to philosophical criticism forms a connecting link, of which it is much easier for an instructor to avail himself, than when the curiosity is to be enticed (as was before proposed) in the contrary direction. The plan of study *here* suggested is copied from the order of Nature herself; the curiosity being led from known and familiar phenomena to an investigation of their general laws.

Nor do I apprehend, that there is any danger of weakening the pleasures of imagination, by thus philosophizing concerning their sources; notwithstanding what Mr Burke has alleged in support of this conclusion, in the following very curious passage. I call it *curious*, as it appears to myself to be much more strongly marked with enthusiasm and extravagance, than with good sense and sober reflection. In point of mere expression, it is unquestionably one of the happiest in Mr Burke's writings; and even, in point of thought, I am far from considering it as altogether destitute of truth.

"The pleasures of imagination are much higher than any "which are derived from a rectitude of the judgment. The "judgment is, for the greater part, employed in throwing "stumbling-blocks in the way of the imagination, in dissi- "pating the scenes of its enchantment, and in tying us down "to the disagreeable yoke of our reason; for almost the on- "ly pleasure that men have in judging better than others, "consists in a sort of conscious pride and superiority, which "arises from thinking rightly; but then, this is an indirect "pleasure; a pleasure which does not immediately result "from the object which is under contemplation. In the "morning of our days, when the senses are unworn and "tender, when the whole man is awake in every part, and "the gloss of novelty fresh upon all the objects that surround "us, how lively at that time are our sensations, but how false

" and inaccurate the judgments we form of things? I despair
" of ever receiving the same degree of pleasure from the most
" excellent performances of genius, which I felt, at that age,
" from pieces which my present judgment regards as trifling
" and contemptible. Every trivial cause of pleasure is apt
" to affect the man of too sanguine a complexion; his appe-
" tite is too keen to suffer his taste to be delicate; and he is
" in all respects what Ovid says of himself in love:

" Molle meum levibus cor est violabile telis,
" Et semper causa est, cur ego semper amem."

In this passage, the very eloquent writer states the pleasures of imagination, and those connected with the exercise of reason, as much more exclusive of each other, than seems to me consistent with fact. Indeed, I am strongly inclined to think (although I do not mean at present to enter into the argument), that they are both enjoyed in their greatest perfection, when properly combined together. The pleasures which Burke has so finely and pathetically touched upon, as peculiar to the imagination *in the morning of our days,* are the effects, not of the weakness of our reasoning powers, but of novelty, of hope, of gaiety, and of a great variety of other adventitious causes, which *then* concur to enhance the enjoyment; and with which the intellectual pleasures which come afterwards (so unfortunately, as Burke seems to suppose) to co-operate, are by no means, in the nature of

things, incompatible, however rarely they may be combined in early youth. I question much, whether, in the picture he has here drawn, the numberless other enjoyments, which distinguish that happy stage of life, did not contribute powerfully to exalt in his conceptions that particular class of pleasures, on the memory of which he dwells with so much rapture; and whether, in estimating their comparative intenseness at different periods, he made due allowances for the effects of association in modifying all our recollections of the past, and more particularly of our tenderest years. I can easily conceive, that a man of taste should *now* persuade himself that, when a boy, he read Blackmore's Arthur, with far greater pleasure than that which he receives at present from the Æneid or Paradise Lost; because, in the former case, the original impressions received from the poem, rise to his remembrance with a thousand borrowed charms: but I never can believe, that the pleasure communicated to the most enthusiastic school-boy by such a performance, bears, in fact, any proportion, even in intenseness, to what Virgil and Milton must necessarily impart to every person possessed of a cultivated taste and an enlightened understanding *.—If

* Si donc on se refroidit sur les vers à mesure qu'on avance en âge, ce n'est point par mépris pour la poésie; c'est au contraire par l'idée de perfection qu'on y attache. C'est parce qu'on a senti par les réflexions, et connu par l'expérience, la distance enorme du médiocre à l'excellent, qu'on ne peut plus souffrir le médiocre. Mais l'excellent gagne à cette comparaison; moins on peut lire de vers, plus on goûte ceux

Reynolds should have happened, in his old age, to revisit the village where he was born, with what transport would he probably recognize the most indifferent paintings to which the opportunities of his childhood afforded him access; and how apt would he be to over-rate the pleasing impressions which he first received from these, by confounding them with the other attractions of his native spot! It is far from being unlikely he would fancy, for the instant, that he had never since been equally delighted: yet how extravagant would be the illusion, to compare any gratification of which his inexperienced mind could possibly be susceptible, with what he enjoyed at that moment of his after life, so admirably fancied by the poet:

——— "When first the Vatican
"Unbarr'd its gates, and to his raptur'd eye
"Gave Raffaelle's glories!"

The passive gratifications connected with the sensible impression of visible objects, were probably *then* much impaired by long use and habit; but how trifling this abatement, in the general effect, when compared with the *intellectual pleasures* so copiously superadded by his experience and observation?

que le vrai talent sait produire. Il n'y a que les vers sans génie qui perdent à ce refroidissement, et ce n'est pas là un grand malheur.—D'Alembert. Réflexions sur la Poésie.

—by his professional studies; by his own practice as a painter; by his powers of judgment, comparison, and reasoning; by his philosophical curiosity concerning the principles of his favourite art and the genius of this particular artist; in short, by every faculty and principle belonging to a rational and sensitive being, to which such an occasion could possibly afford any exercise? The greater the number of such intellectual enjoyments, that we can contrive to attach to those objects which fall under the province of Taste, the more powerful must the effect of these objects become:—Nor would I be understood to exclude, in this observation, the pleasures connected with the severer sciences that regulate the mechanical processes of the different arts. Akenside has taken notice of the additional charms which physical science lends even to the beauties of nature; and has illustrated this by an example, which to me has always appeared peculiarly fortunate,—the redoubled delight which he himself experienced, when he first looked at the rainbow, after studying the Newtonian theory of light and colours:

——————— "Nor ever yet
"The melting rainbow's vermeil-tinctur'd hues,
"To me have shone so pleasing, as when first
"The hand of Science pointed out the path
"In which the sun-beams, gleaming from the west,
"Fall on the watry cloud, whose darksome veil
"Involves the orient *."———

* Note (R r).

But waving all these considerations, and granting Mr Burke's general doctrine to be true, that the pleasures of imagination are enjoyed with the most exquisite delight, when they are altogether uncontrouled by the reasoning faculty, the practical lesson will still be found, on either supposition, to be exactly the same; for it is only by combining the pleasures arising from both parts of our frame, that the duration of the former can be prolonged beyond the thoughtless period of youth; or that they can be enjoyed even *then*, for any length of time, without ending in satiety and languor. The activity which always accompanies the exercise of our reasoning powers seems, in fact, to be a zest essentially necessary, for enlivening the comparatively indolent state of mind, which the pleasures of imagination and of taste have a tendency to encourage.

I will venture to add, however contrary to the prevailing opinion on this subject, that by a judicious combination of the pleasures of reason with those of the imagination, the vigour of the latter faculty may be preserved, in a great measure, unimpaired, even to the more advanced periods of life. According to the common doctrine, its gradual decline, after the short season of youth, is not merely the natural consequence of growing reason and experience, but the necessary effect of our physical organization: And yet, numberless examples, in direct opposition to this conclusion, must im-

mediately occur to every person, at all acquainted with literary history. But as I must not enter here into details with respect to these, I shall content myself with a short quotation from Sir Joshua Reynolds, whose opinion on this point, I am happy to find, coincides entirely with my own; and, whose judgment, concerning a matter of fact, so intimately connected with his ordinary habits of observation and of thought, is justly entitled to much deference. His opinion too, it is to be remarked, is not only stated with perfect confidence; but the prejudice, to which it stands opposed, is treated with contempt and ridicule, as not entitled to a serious refutation.

"We will allow a poet to express his meaning, when his "meaning is not well known to himself, with a certain de- "gree of obscurity, as it is one source of the sublime. But "when, in plain prose, we gravely talk of attending to times "and seasons when the imagination shoots with the greatest "vigour; whether at the summer solstice or the equinox; "sagaciously observing, how much the wild freedom and li- "berty of imagination is cramped by attention to vulgar "rules; and how this same imagination begins to grow dim "in advanced age, smothered and deadened by too much judg- "ment;—when we talk such language, and entertain such "sentiments as these, we generally rest contented with mere "words, or at best entertain notions, not only groundless, but "pernicious."

——— "I can believe, that a man, eminent when young "for possessing poetical imagination, may, from having taken "another road, so neglect its cultivation as to shew less of "its powers in his latter life. But I am persuaded, that "scarce a poet is to be found, from Homer down to Dryden, "who preserved a sound mind in a sound body, and con- "tinued practising his profession to the very last, whose "latter works are not as replete with the fire of imagina- "tion, as those which were produced in his more youthful "days *."

After all, however, it cannot be denied, that the differences among individuals, in the natural history of this power, are immense; and that instances very frequently occur, from which the prejudice now under consideration seems, on a superficial view, to receive no small countenance. If examples have now and then appeared of old men continuing to display it in its full perfection, how many are the cases, in which, after a short promise of uncommon exuberance, the sources of nourishment have seemed all at once to dry up, and the plant to wither to its very roots, without the hope or the possibility of a revival?—In instances of this last description, I could almost venture to assert, that if circumstances be accurately examined, it will invariably be found, that a lively imagination is united with a weak judgment; with scanty stores of acquired knowledge, and with little in-

* Discourse delivered 10th Dec. 1776.

dustry to supply the defect. The consequence is, that the materials, which it is the province of imagination to modify and to combine, are soon exhausted; the internal resources of reason and meditation are wanting; and the imagination either disappears altogether, or degenerates into childishness and folly. In those poets and other artists, on the contrary, who have retained to the last all the powers of their genius, Imagination will be found to be one only of the many endowments and habits, which constituted their intellectual superiority;—an understanding enriched every moment by a new accession of information from without, and fed by a perennial spring of new ideas from within;—a systematical pursuit of the same object through the whole of life, profiting, at every step, by the lessons of its own experience, and the recollection of its own errors;—above all, the steady exercise of reason and good sense in controuling, guiding, and stimulating this important, but subordinate faculty; subjecting it betimes to the wholesome discipline of rules, and, by a constant application of it to its destined purposes, preserving to it entire, all the advantages which it received from the hand of nature.

## CHAPTER SECOND.

CONTINUATION OF THE SUBJECT.—REPLY TO AN OBJECTION FOUNDED ON THE SUPPOSED VIGOUR OF IMAGINATION IN THE EARLIER PERIODS OF SOCIETY.

It now only remains for me, before I conclude these speculations, to obviate an objection against a supposition, involved in many of the preceding reasonings, and more especially in the remarks which have been just stated, on the possibility of prolonging the pleasures of Imagination, after the enthusiasm of youth has subsided. The objection I allude to, is founded on a doctrine which has been commonly, or rather universally taught of late; according to which imagination is represented as in its state of highest perfection in those rude periods of society, when the faculties shoot up wild and free. If imagination require culture for its deve-

lopement; and if, in the mind of an individual, it may be rendered more vigorous and luxuriant when subjected to the discipline of reason and good sense, what account (it may be asked) shall we give of those figurative strains of oratory which have been quoted from the harangues of American Indians; and of those relics of the poetry of rude nations, which it is the pride of human genius, in its state of greatest refinement, to study and to imitate?

In order to form correct notions with respect to this question, it is necessary to consider, that when I speak of a cultivated imagination, I mean an imagination which has acquired such a degree of activity as to delight in its own exertions; to delight in conjuring up those ideal combinations which withdraw the mind from the present objects of sense, and transport it into a new world. Now, of this activity and versatility of imagination, I find no traces among rude tribes. Their diction is, indeed, highly metaphorical; but the metaphors they employ are either the unavoidable consequences of an imperfect language, or they are inspired by the mechanical impulse of passion. In both instances, imagination operates to a certain degree; but in neither is imagination the *primary* cause of the effect; inasmuch as in the one, it is excited by passion, and in the other, called forth by the pressure of necessity. A strong confirmation of this remark may be drawn from the indolence of savages, and their improvi-

dence concerning futurity; a feature in their character, in which all the most authentic pictures of it agree. Dr Robertson himself, notwithstanding the countenance which he has occasionally given to the doctrine which I am now combating, has stated this circumstance so very strongly, that it is surprising he was not led, by his own description, to perceive, that his general conclusions concerning the poetical genius of savages, required some limitation. "The "thoughts and attention of a savage are confined within the "small circle of objects immediately conducive to his pre-"servation and enjoyment. Every thing beyond that "escapes his observation, or is perfectly indifferent to him. "Like a mere animal, what is before his eyes interests and "affects him: what is out of sight, or at a distance, makes "no impression. When, on the approach of the evening, a "Caribbee feels himself disposed to go to rest, no considera-"tion will tempt him to sell his hammoc. But, in the morn-"ing, when he is sallying out to the business or pastime of "the day, he will part with it for the slightest toy that "catches his fancy. At the close of winter, while the im-"pression of what he has suffered from the rigour of the "climate, is fresh in the mind of the North American, he sets "himself with vigour to prepare materials for erecting a "comfortable hut to protect him against the inclemencies of "the succeeding season; but, as soon as the weather be-"comes mild, he forgets what is past, abandons his work,

" and never thinks of it more, until the return of cold " compels him, when too late, to resume it." How is it possible to reconcile these facts with the assertion, that imagination is most lively and vigorous in the ruder periods of society?

The indifference of savages to religious impressions, gives additional evidence to the foregoing conclusion. " The powers " of their uncultivated understandings are so limited," (says the eloquent and faithful historian just now quoted) " that their " observations and reflections reach little beyond the mere ob- " jects of sense. The numerous and splendid ceremonies of " popish worship, as they catch the eye, please and interest " them; but when their instructors attempt to explain the ar- " ticles of faith with which these external observances are " connected, though they listen with patience, they so little " conceive the meaning of what they hear, that their acquies- " cence does not merit the name of belief. Their indifference " is still greater than their incapacity. Attentive only to the " present moment, and engrossed by the objects before them, " the Indians so seldom reflect on what is past, or take " thought for what is to come, that neither the promises nor " threats of religion make much impression upon them; and " while their foresight rarely extends so far as the next day, " it is almost impossible to inspire them with solicitude about " the concerns of a future world."

In critical discussions concerning the poetical relics which have been handed down to us from the earlier periods of society, frequent appeals have been made to the eloquence of savage orators, as a proof of the peculiar relish with which the pleasures of imagination are enjoyed by uncultivated minds. But this inference has been drawn from a very partial view of circumstances. The eloquence of savages (as I already hinted) is the natural offspring of passion impatient to give vent to its feelings, and struggling with the restraints of a scanty vocabulary; and it implies none of those inventive powers which are displayed in the creation of characters, of situations, of events, of ideal scenery;—none of the powers, in short, which form the distinguishing attribute of poetical genius. In the mind of the poet, on the other hand, it happens much less frequently, that imagination is inspired by passion, than passion by imagination; and, in all cases, the specific pleasures of imagination are most completely enjoyed when the passions are at rest. In order, besides, to render these pleasures a solid accession to human happiness, it is necessary that the individual should be able, at will, so to apply the faculty from which they arise, to its appropriate objects, as to find in its exercise an unfailing source of delight, whenever he wishes to enliven the intervals of bodily labour, or of animal indulgence;—a capacity, surely, which is by no means implied in the use of that figurative diction by which savages are said to convey their ideas; and which is utterly

irreconcilable with the most authentic accounts we have received of the great features of their intellectual character. On this occasion, we may, with confidence, adopt the beautiful words which one of our poets has, with a more than questionable propriety, applied to a gallant and enlightened people, entitled to a very high rank in the scale of European civilization:

> "Unknown to *them*, when sensual pleasures cloy,
> "To fill the languid pause with finer joy."

Where particular circumstances, indeed, have given any encouragement, among rude tribes, to the pacific profession of a bard; still more, where an *order* of bards has formed a part of the political establishment, individuals may be conceived to have occasionally arisen, whose poetical compositions are likely to increase in reputation as the world grows older. Obvious reasons may be assigned, why imagination should be susceptible of culture, at a period when the intellectual powers which require the aid of experience and observation must necessarily continue in infancy; and the very peculiarities, which, in such circumstances, its productions exhibit, although they would justly be regarded as blemishes in those of a more refined age, may interest the philosopher, and even please the critic, as characteristical of the human mind in the earlier stages of its progress. The same circumstances, too, which

influence so powerfully the eloquence of the savage orator, furnish to the bard a language peculiarly adapted to his purpose, and in which the antiquaries of a distant age are to perceive numberless charms of which the author was unconscious. In the compositions of such a poet, even the defects of his taste become, in the judgment of the multitude, proofs of the vigour of his imagination; the powers of genius, where they are irregularly displayed, producing upon a superficial observer, an imposing but illusory effect in point of magnitude, similar to that of an ill-proportioned human figure, or of a building which violates the established rules of architecture. No prejudice can be more groundless than this; and yet it seems to be the chief foundation of the common doctrine which considers imagination and taste as incompatible with each other, and measures the former by the number and the boldness of its trespasses against the latter. My own opinion, I acknowledge, is, that, as the habitual exercise of imagination is essential to those intellectual experiments of which a genuine and unborrowed taste is the slow result, so, on the other hand, that it is in the productions of genius, when disciplined by an enlightened taste, that the noblest efforts of imagination are to be found.

Nor is there any thing in this conclusion, at all inconsistent with what I have already asserted, concerning the dormant and inactive state of imagination in the mind of a sa-

vage; or with the account given, in the preceding Essay, of the gradual process by which taste is formed. To a professional bard, in whatever period of society he may appear, the exercise of his imagination, and, as far as circumstances may allow, the culture of his taste, must necessarily be the great objects of his study; and therefore, no inference can be drawn from *his* attainments and habits to those of the mass of the community to which he belongs. The blind admiration with which his rude essays are commonly received by his contemporaries, and the ideas of inspiration and of prophetic gifts which they are apt to connect with the efforts of his invention, are proofs of this; shewing evidently, that he is then considered as a being, to whose powers nothing analogous exists in the ordinary endowments of human nature. In such a state of manners as ours, when the advantages of education are in some degree imparted to all, the institution of a separate order of bards would be impossible; and we begin even to call in question the old opinion, that poetical genius is more the offspring of nature than of study. The increasing frequency of a certain degree of poetical talent, both among the higher and the lower orders of the community, renders this conclusion not unnatural, in the present times; and the case seems to have been somewhat the same in the Augustan age:

"Scribimus indocti doctique poemata passim."

If these remarks are well-founded, the diffusion of *the Pleasures of Imagination*, as well as the diffusion of *knowledge*, is to be ranked among the blessings for which we are indebted to the progress of society:—And it is a circumstance extremely worthy of consideration, that the same causes which render imagination *more* productive of pleasure, render it *less* productive of pain than before. Indeed, I am much inclined to doubt, whether, without the controuling guidance of reason, the pleasures or the pains of imagination are likely to preponderate. Whatever the result may be in particular instances, it certainly depends, in a great measure, upon accidents unconnected with the general state of manners. I cannot, therefore, join in the sentiment so pleasingly and fancifully expressed in the following lines of Voltaire; in which (by the way) a strong resemblance is observable to a passage already quoted from Burke:

" O l'heureux tems que celui de ces fables,
" Des bons démons, des esprits familiers,
" Des farfadets, aux mortels secourables!
" On écoutait tous ces faits admirables
" Dans son château, près d'un large foyer:
" Le père et l'oncle, et la mère et la fille,
" Et les voisins, et toute la famille,
" Ouvraient l'oreille à Monsieur l'Aumônier,
" Qui leur faisait des contes de sorcier.

" On a banné les démons et les fées;
" Sous la raison les graces étouffées,

" Livrent nos cœurs à l'insipidité ;
" Le raisonner tristement s'accredite ;
" On court, hélas! apres la vérité ;
" Ah! croyez moi, l'erreur a son mérite * :

For my own part, I think I can now enjoy these tales of wonder with as lively a relish as the most credulous devotee in the superstitious times which gave them birth: Nor do I value the pleasure which they afford me the less, that my reason teaches me to regard them as vehicles of amusement, not as articles of faith.—But it is not *reason* alone that operates, in an age like the present, in correcting the credulity of our forefathers. Imagination herself furnishes the most effectual of all remedies against those errors of which she was, in the first instance, the cause; the versatile activity which she acquires by constant and varied exercise, depriving superstition of the most formidable engine it was able heretofore to employ, for subjugating the infant understanding. In proportion to the number and diversity of the objects to which she turns her attention, the dangers are diminished which are apt to arise from her illusions, when they are suffered always to run in the same channel; and in this manner, while the sources of enjoyment become more copious and varied, the concomitant pains and inconveniencies disappear.

* Contes de Guillaume Vadé.

This conclusion coincides with a remark in that chapter of the Philosophy of the Human Mind which relates to Imagination;—that, by a frequent and habitual exercise of this faculty, we at once cherish its vigour, and bring it more and more under our command.—"As we can withdraw the attention at pleasure from objects of sense, and transport ourselves into a world of our own, so, when we wish to moderate our enthusiasm, we can dismiss the objects of imagination, and return to our ordinary perceptions and occupations. But in a mind to which these intellectual visions are not familiar, and which borrows them completely from the genius of another, imagination, when once excited, becomes perfectly ungovernable, and produces something like a temporary insanity."—"Hence" (I have added) "the wonderful effects of popular eloquence on the lower orders; effects which are much more remarkable than what it produces on men of education."

In the history of Imagination, nothing appears to me more interesting than the fact stated in the foregoing passage; suggesting plainly this practical lesson, that the early and systematical culture of this faculty, while it is indispensably necessary to its future strength and activity, is the most effectual of all expedients for subjecting it, in the more serious concerns of life, to the supremacy of our rational powers. And, in truth, I apprehend it will be found, that,

by accustoming it in childhood to a frequent change of its objects (one set of illusions being continually suffered to efface the impressions of another), the understanding may be more successfully invigorated than by any precepts addressed directly to itself; and the terrors of the nursery, where they have unfortunately overclouded the infant mind, gradually and insensibly dispelled, in the first dawning of reason. The *momentary belief* with which the visions of imagination are always accompanied, and upon which many of its pleasures depend, will continue unshaken; while that *permanent or habitual belief*, which they are apt to produce, where it gains the ascendant over our nobler principles, will vanish for ever.

But the subject grows upon me in extent, and rises in importance, as I proceed; and the size of my Volume reminds me, that it is now more than time to bring these speculations to a close. Here, therefore, I pause for the present;—not, however, without some hope of soon resuming a more systematical analysis of our intellectual powers and capacities.

# NOTES

AND

# ILLUSTRATIONS.

# NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

## NOTE (A), P. 4.

That there are many words used in philosophical discourse, which do not admit of logical definition, is abundantly manifest. This is the case with all those words that signify things uncompounded, and consequently unsusceptible of analysis;—a proposition, one should think, almost self-evident; and yet it is surprising, how very generally it has been overlooked by philosophers.

That Aristotle himself, with all his acuteness, was not aware of it, appears sufficiently from the attempts he has made to define various words denoting some of the simplest and most elementary objects of human thought. Of this, remarkable instances occur in his definitions of *time* and of *motion;* definitions which were long the wonder and admiration of the learned; but which are now remembered only, from their singular obscurity and absurdity. It is owing to a want of attention to this circumstannce, that metaphysicians have so often puzzled themselves about the import of terms, employed familiarly without the slightest danger of mistake by the most illiterate;—imagining, that what they could not define must involve some peculiar mystery; when, in fact, the difficulty of the definition arose entirely from the perfect simplicity of the thing to be defined. Quid sit Tempus, (said St Augustine) si nemo quærat a me, scio; si quis interroget, nescio.

According to Dr Reid, Des Cartes and Locke are the earliest writers by whom this fundamental principle in logic was stated; but the remark is by no means correct. I do not know if Mr Locke himself has expressed it more clearly than our celebrated Scotish lawyer Lord Stair, in a work published several years before the Essay on Human understanding; and it is worthy of observation, that, so far from ascribing the merit of it to Des Cartes, he censures that philosopher, in common with Aristotle, for a want of due attention to it.

" Necesse est quosdam terminos esse adeo claras, ut clarioribus elucidari nequeant, ali-
" oquin infinitus esset progressus in terminorum explicatione, adeo ut nulla possit esse
" clara cognitio, nec ullus certo scire possit alterius conceptus."

" Tales termini sunt *Cogitatio*, *Motus*, quibus non dantur clariores conceptus aut ter-
" mini, et brevi apparrebit, quam inutiliter Aristoteles et Cartesius conati sunt definire
" *Motum*."

Physiologia Nova Experimentalis, &c. (p. 9.) Authore D. de Stair, Carolo II. Britanniarum Regi a Consiliis Juris et Status. Ludg. Batav. 1686.—See also p. 79 of the same book.

Locke's Essay (as appears from the dedication) was first printed in 1689. Lord Stair's work must have been published a considerable time before. The Latin translation of it (which is the only edition of the book I have seen) is dated *1686*; and bears, on the title-page, that the original had appeared before. *Nuper Latinitate donate.*

According to a learned and ingenious writer, Aristotle himself " had taught, before " Mr Locke, that what the latter calls simple ideas could not be defined."—(Translation of Aristotle's Ethics and Politics, by Dr Gillies, Vol. I. p. 138, 2d edit.) The passages, however, to which he has referred, seem to me much less decisive evidence in support of this assertion, than Aristotle's own definitions are against it. Nor can I bring myself to alter this opinion, even by Dr Gillies's attempt to elucidate the celebrated definition of Motion.

## NOTE (B), P. 25.

It may be of use to some of my readers, before proceeding to the third chapter, to read with attention, the following extracts from Dr Reid.

" The word *idea* occurs so frequently in modern philosophical writings upon the mind,
" and is so ambiguous in its meaning, that it is necessary to make some observations upon
" it. There are chiefly two meanings of this word in modern authors, a popular and a
" philosophical.

*First*, In popular language, *idea* signifies the same thing as conception, apprehension,
" notion. To have an idea of any thing, is to conceive it. To have a distinct idea is to
" conceive it distinctly. To have no idea of it, is not to conceive it at all.

" When the word is taken in this popular sense, no man can possibly doubt, whether
" he has ideas. For he that doubts must think, and to think is to have ideas.

" *Secondly*, According to the philosophical meaning of the word idea, it does not
" signify that *act* of the mind which we call thought or conception, but some *object* of

" *thought.* Ideas, according to Mr Locke, (whose frequent use of this word has pro-
" bably been the occasion of its being adopted into common language) ' are nothing
" but the immediate objects of the mind in thinking.' But of those *objects of thought*
" called ideas, different sects of philosophers have given a very different account.——

" Mr Locke, who uses the word *idea* so very frequently, tells us, that he means the
" same thing by it, as is commonly meant by *species* or *phantasm.* Gassendi, from
" whom Locke borrowed more than from any other author, says the same. The words
" *species* and *phantasm,* are terms of art in the Peripatetic system, and the meaning of
" them is to be learned from it.

" Modern philosophers, as well as the Peripatetics of old, have conceived, that external
" objects cannot be the immediate objects of our thought; that there must be some image of
" them in the mind itself, in which, as in a mirror, they are seen. And the name *idea,*
" in the philosophical sense of it, is given to those internal and immediate objects of our
" thoughts. The external thing is the remote or mediate object; but the idea or image
" of that object in the mind, is the immediate object, without which we could have no
" perception, no remembrance, no conception of the mediate object.

" When, therefore, in common language, we speak of having an idea of any thing, we
" mean no more by that expression, but *thinking of it.* The vulgar allow, that this expres-
" sion implies a mind that thinks; and an act of that mind which we call thinking. But
" besides these, the philosopher conceives the existence of an *idea* which is the immediate
" object of thought. The idea is in the mind itself, and can have no existence but in a
" mind that thinks; but the remote or mediate object may be something external, as the
" sun or moon; it may be something past or future; it may be something which never
" existed. This is the philosophical meaning of the word *idea*; and we may observe,
" that this meaning of that word is built upon a philosophical opinion: For, if philoso-
" phers had not believed that there are such immediate objects of all our thoughts in the
" mind, they would never have used the word idea to express them.

" I shall only add on this article, that although I may have occasion to use the word
" idea in this philosophical sense, in explaining the opinions of others, I shall have no
" occasion to use it in expressing my own, because I believe *ideas,* taken in this sense,
" to be a mere fiction of philosophers. And, in the popular meaning of the word, there
" is the less occasion to use it, because the English words *thought, notion, apprehension,*
" answer the purpose as well as the Greek word idea; with this advantage, that they are
" less ambiguous."—(Essays on the Intellectual Powers, p. 22, et seq.)

After this long quotation from Dr Reid, it is proper to mention, what has induced me to make an occasional use, in these Essays, of a word which he has taken so much pains to discard from the language of philosophy.

My reason is shortly this, that finding, after all he has written on the subject, the word *idea* still maintains, and is likely long to maintain its ground, it seemed to me a more practicable attempt to limit and define its meaning, than to banish it altogether. For this purpose, I generally couple it with some synonymous word, such as *thought* or *notion*, so as to exclude completely all the theoretical doctrines usually implied in it; and I cannot help flattering myself with the hope, that, in this way, I may be able to contribute something towards the gradual extirpation of the prejudices, to which, in its philosophical acceptation, it has hitherto given so powerful a support.

It may gratify the curiosity of some of my readers, to be able to compare the language of Des Cartes concerning *ideas*, with that of Mr Locke. According to the first of these writers, "an *idea* is the thing thought upon, as far as it is *objectively* in the under-"standing." *Idea est ipsa res cogitata, quatenus est objectivè in intellectu.* By way of comment upon this, he tells us afterwards, in reply to a difficulty started by one of his correspondents;—ubi advertendum, me loqui de idea quæ nunquam est extra intellectum, et ratione cujus *esse objectivè* non aliud significat, quàm esse in intellectu eo modo quo objecta in illo esse solent.—(Responsio ad Primas Objectiones in Meditationes Cartesii.)

I may not have a better opportunity of observing afterwards, that Des Cartes rejected entirely that part of the Peripatetic system which accounts for perception by *species* or *ideas* proceeding from external things, and transmitted to the mind through the channel of the senses. His arguments against that hypothesis were so clear and conclusive that Gravesande, in a small treatise published in 1737, speaks of it as unworthy of refutation: Explosam dudum, de speciebus à rebus procedentibus, et menti impressis, sententiam explicare et refellere, inutile credimus*.—(Introductio ad Philosophiam, p. 98.)

While Des Cartes, however, dissented on *this* point, from the schoolmen, he maintained, in common with them, that what we immediately perceive is not the external *object*, but an idea or image of it in our mind.

Among our later writers, I do not recollect any who have entered into so elaborate an explanation of the nature of *ideas*, considered as the *objects* of thought, as the ingenious author of a work entitled, *the Light of Nature Pursued.* The following passage, which he gives as the substance of his own creed on this point, is, I suspect, a tolerably faithful exposition of prejudices which still remain in most minds; and which are insensibly im-

* Mr Hume afterwards relapsed into the old scholastic language on this subject: "The slightest phi-"losophy teaches us, that nothing can ever be present to the mind but an *image or perception*; and that "the senses are only the *inlets* through which these are received, without being ever able to produce any "immediate intercourse between the mind and the object."—Essays.

How this language is to be reconciled with the philosophy which teaches, that ideas or images can have no existence but in a mind, Mr Hume has not attempted to explain.

bibed in early life, from the hypothetical phraseology bequeathed to us by the school-men.

"Idea is the same as image, and the term imagination implies a receptacle of images: "but image being appropriated, by common use, to visible objects, could not well be "extended to other things without confusion; wherefore learned men have imported the "Greek word idea, signifying image or appearance, to which, being their own peculiar "property, they might affix as large a signification as they pleased. For the image of a "sound, or of goodness, would have offended our delicacy, but the idea of either goes "down glibly: therefore idea is the same with respect to things in general, as image "with respect to objects of vision.

"In order to render the notion of ideas clearer, let us begin with images. When a "peacock spreads his tail in our sight, we have a full view of the creature with all his "gaudy plumage before us; the bird remains at some distance, but the light reflected "from him paints an image upon our eyes, and the optic nerves transmit it to the sen-"sory. This image, when arrived at the ends of the nerves, becomes an idea, and gives "us our discernment of the animal; and after the bird is gone out of view, we can recal "the idea of him to perform the same office as before, though in a duller and fainter "manner. So, when the nightingale warbles, the sound reaches our ears, and, passing "through the auditory nerves, exhibits an idea, affecting us with the discernment of her "music: and after she has given over singing, the same idea may recur to our remem-"brance, or be raised again by us at pleasure. In like manner, our other senses con-"vey ideas of their respective kinds, which recur again to our view long after the ob-"jects first exciting them have been removed.

"These ideas having entered the mind, intermingle, unite, separate, throw themselves "into various combinations and postures, and thereby generate new ideas of reflection, "strictly so called, such as those of comparing, dividing, distinguishing, of abstraction, "relation, with many others: all which remain with us as stock for our further use on "future occasions."———

—"What those substances are whereof our ideas are the modifications, *whether parts "of the mind as the members are of our body, or contained in it like wafers in a box, or "enveloped by it like fish in water; whether of a spiritual, corporeal, or middle nature "between both*, I need not now ascertain. All I mean at present to lay down is this: "That, in every exercise of the understanding, that which discerns is numerically and "substantially distinct from that which is discerned; and that an act of the understand-"ing is not so much our own proper act, as the act of something else operating upon "us"—Vol. I. p. 15, et seq. (edit. of 1768.)

On this and on some other points touched upon in these Essays, I am sorry that I have the misfortune to differ from an author, for whose talents, learning, and taste, I enter-

tain a high respect. I have purposely avoided any reference to his book through the whole of this volume, as his reasonings did not appear to myself to invalidate the conclusions which I was chiefly anxious to establish. See Academical Questions by the Right Honourable Sir William Drummond (London, 1805): particularly Chapter X., which contains his defence of the Ideal Theory. It is directed chiefly against some arguments and expressions of Dr Reid; and must be acknowledged, even by those who dissent the most widely from its doctrines, to be written with equal ability and candour.

## NOTE (C), P. 37.

"Those things which are inferior and secondary, are by no means the principles or "causes of the more excellent; and, though we admit the common interpretations, and "allow sense to be a principle of science, we must, however, call it a principle, not as "if it was the efficient cause, but as it rouses our soul to the recollection of general ideas. "According to the same way of thinking, is it said in the Timæus, that through the "sight and hearing we acquire to ourselves philosophy, because we pass from objects of "sense to Reminiscence or Recollection."——"For, in as much as the soul, by "containing the principles of all beings, is a sort of omniform representation or exemplar: when it is roused by objects of sense, it recollects those principles, which it "contains within, and brings them forth."

The foregoing passages (which I give in the version of Mr Harris) are taken from a manuscript commentary of the Platonic Olympiodorus upon the Phædo of Plato. See Harris's Works, Vol. I. p. 426.

The following lines are from Boethius, who, after having enumerated many acts of the Mind or Intellect, wholly distinct from Sensation, and independent of it, thus concludes:

"Hæc est efficiens magis
"Longè caussa potentior,
"Quam quæ materiæ modo
"Impressas patitur notas.
"Præcedit tamen excitans,
"Ac vires animi movens,
"Vivo in corpore passio.
"Cum vel lux oculos ferit,
"Vel vox auribus instrepit;
"Tum MENTIS VIGOR excitus,
"QUAS INTUS SPECIES TENET,
"Ad motus simileis vocans,

" Notis applicat exteris,
" INTRORSUMQUE RECONDITIS
" FORMIS miscet imagines. De Consol. Phil. l. v.

To these quotations I shall only add a short extract from Dr Price.

" According to Cudworth, abstract ideas are implied in the *cognoscitive power of the* " *mind; which contains in itself virtually (as the future plant or tree is contained in* " *the seed) general notions or exemplars of all things, which are exerted by it, or unfold* " *and discover themselves as occasions invite, and proper circumstances occur.* This, " no doubt, many will very freely condemn, as whimsical and extravagant. I have, I " own, a different opinion of it; but yet I should not care to be obliged to defend it." Price's Review, &c. (London, 1769) p. 39.

## NOTE (D), P. 48.

The word *sentiment*, agreeably to the use made of it by our best English writers, expresses, in my opinion, very happily, those complex determinations of the mind, which result from the co-operation of our rational powers and of our moral feelings.—We do not speak of a man's *sentiments* concerning a mechanical contrivance, or a physical hypothesis, or concerning any speculative question whatever, by which the feelings are not liable to be roused, or the heart affected.

This account of the meaning of the word *sentiment* corresponds, I think, exactly with the use made of it by Mr Smith, in the title of his Theory. It agrees also *nearly* with the following explanation of its import, in Campbell's Philosophy of Rhetoric: " What " is addressed solely to the moral powers of the mind, is not so properly denominated the " *pathetic*, as the *sentimental.* The term, I own, is rather modern, but is nevertheless " convenient, as it fills a vacant room, and does not, like most of our new-fangled words, " justle out older and worthier occupants, to the no small detriment of the language. It " occupies, so to speak, the middle place between the pathetic and that which is addressed to the imagination, and partakes of both, adding to the warmth of the former, the " grace and attractions of the latter."

Would not Campbell have stated this philological fact still more accurately, if he had substituted the word *understanding* instead of *imagination*, in the last sentence?—making such alterations on the subsequent clause, as this change would have rendered necessary.—In proposing the following, I wish only to convey my idea more clearly:—" and " partakes of both, adding to the interest of the former, the sober and deliberate convic- " tion of the latter."

Dr Beattie has said, "that the true and the old English sense of the word *sentiment* is "a formed opinion, notion, or principle*;" and he is certainly supported in this remark, by the explanation of that word in Johnson's Dictionary. It is remarkable, however, that the very first authority quoted by Johnson, is strongly in favour of what I have stated concerning the shade of difference between the words *sentiment* and *opinion*. "The consideration of the reason, why they are annexed to so many other ideas, "serving to give us due *sentiments of the wisdom and goodness* of the sovereign Dispos- "er of all things, may not be unsuitable to the main end of these inquiries." (Locke.)

One thing at least must be granted, that, if this term be considered as exactly synonymous with *opinion* or *principle*, it is altogether superfluous in our language; whereas, in the restricted sense in which I am inclined to employ it, it forms a real and most convenient accession to our philosophical vocabulary.

If these remarks be just, Dr Reid has made use of the word somewhat improperly (at least according to present usage), when he speaks, in his Essays on the Intellectual Powers, of the *sentiments* of Mr Locke concerning perception; and of the *sentiments* of Arnauld, of Berkeley, and of Hume, concerning ideas.—He seems, himself, to have been sensible of this; for in his Essays on the Active Powers, published three years after the former, he observes, that "*sentiment* was wont to signify opinion or judgment of any kind; "but, of late, is appropriated to signify an opinion or judgment, that strikes, and pro- "duces some agreeable or uneasy emotion." (P. 479. 4to edit.)

Mr Hume, on the other hand, sometimes employs (after the example of the French metaphysicians) *sentiment* as synonymous with *feeling*; an use of the word quite unprecedented in our tongue.

In ascertaining the propriety of our vernacular expressions, it is a rule with me, never to appeal from the practice of our own standard authors to etymological considerations, or to the use which is made, in other languages, either ancient or modern, of the corresponding derivatives from the same root. In the present instance, accordingly, I pay no regard to the definitions given of the word *sentiment*, in French dictionaries; although I readily acknowledge, that it was from that country we originally borrowed it: And I am much fortified in my doubts with respect to the competency of foreign tribunals to decide any such questions, by the variety of senses attached to this very word, in the different languages of modern Europe. On this point I willingly borrow a few remarks from a very ingenious and judicious critic.

"Le mot *sentiment*, dérivé du primitif Latin *sentire*, a passé dans les langues modernes, "mais avec des nuances d'acception particulières à chacune d'elles. En Italien, *sentimen-* "*to* exprime deux idées différentes; 1. l'opinion qu'on a sur un objet, ou sur une

* Essay on Truth, Part ii. c. i. sect. 1.

" question; 2. la faculté de sentir. En Anglois, *sentiment* n'a que le premier de ces " deux sens. En Espagnol, *sentimiento* signifie *souffrance*, acception que le mot pri- " mitif a quelquefois en Latin.

" En François, *sentiment* a les deux acceptions de l'Italien, mais avec cette différence, " que dans la dernière il a beaucoup d'extension. Non seulement il designe généralement " en François toutes les affections de l'âme, mais il exprime plus particulièrement la pas- " sion de l'amour. En voici un example; *son* SENTIMENT *est si profond que rien au* " *monde ne peut la distraire des objets qui servent à le nourrir.* Si l'on traduit cette phrase " dans toute autre langue, en conservant le mot *sentiment*, on fera un *Gallicisme.* On en " fera également un, en employant ce mot dans la traduction des phrases suivantes: " *c'est un homme à* SENTIMENT; *voilà du* SENTIMENT; *il y a du* SENTIMENT *dans cette* " *piece; il est tout âme, tout* SENTIMENT;—parce qu'il y est pris dans une acception " vague, pour tout ce qui tient à la faculté de sentir. Aussi STERNE en a-t-il fait un en " donnant à son voyage le titre de *sentimental*; mot que les François n'ont pas manqué " de réclamer, et de fairè passer dans leur langue, parce qu'il est parfaitement analogue à " l'acception qu'ils ont donnée au mot *sentiment.*"—(Dissertation sur les Gallicismes, par M. Suard.)

It does not appear to me that Sterne can be justly charged with a *Gallicism*, in the title which he has given to his book; the adjective *sentimental*, although little used before his time, being strictly conformable in its meaning to the true English import of the substantive on which it is formed. On the contrary, I think, that in adopting the adjective *sentimental*, as well as in the phrase *homme à sentiment*, the French have imitated the English idiom. In applying, indeed, the word *sentiment* to the passion of *love*, they must be allowed to have led the way: Nor do I know that their example has been yet followed by any good writer in this country.—M. Suard was probably misled, in this criticism on Sterne, by Johnson's Dictionary.

They who are aware of the frequent use of this word, which has been lately made by our moral writers, will not blame me for the length of this note; more especially, when they consider what a source of misapprehension it has been between English and French philosophers. How oddly does the following sentence sound in our ears! " Les nouveaux " philosophes veulent que la couleur soit un sentiment de l'ame."

## NOTE (E), P. 55.

The principal steps of Berkeley's reasoning, in support of his scheme of *idealism*, are expressed in the following propositions, which are stated nearly in his own words.

" We are percipient of nothing but our own perceptions and ideas."—" It is evident " to any one who takes a survey of the objects of human knowledge, that they are either " ideas actually imprinted on the senses; or else such as are perceived by attending to the " passions and operations of the mind; or lastly, ideas formed by help of memory and " imagination, either compounding, dividing, or barely representing those originally per- " ceived in the foresaid ways."———" Light and colours, heat and cold, extension and " figure; in a word, the things we see and feel, what are they but so many sensations, " notions, ideas, or impressions on the sense; and is it possible to separate, even in " thought, any of these from perception? For my own part, I might as easily divide a " thing from itself.————As for our senses, by them we have the knowledge only of " our sensations, ideas, or those things that are immediately perceived by sense, call them " what you will: But they do not inform us, that *things exist without a mind, or unper-* " ceived—like to those which are perceived.————As there can be no notion or " thought but in a thinking being, so there can be no sensation, but in a sentient being: " it is the act or feeling of a sentient being; its very essence consists in being felt. No- " thing can resemble a sensation, but a similar sensation in the same, or in some other " mind. To think that any quality in a thing inanimate can resemble a sensation, is " absurd, and a contradiction in terms."

This argument of Berkeley is very clearly and concisely put by Reid. " If we have " any knowledge of a material world, it must be by the senses: but *by the senses we have* " *no knowledge, but of our sensations only;* and our sensations, which are attributes of " *Mind*, can have no resemblance to any qualities of a thing that is inanimate."

It is observed by Dr Reid, that the only proposition in this demonstration, which admits of doubt, is, that by our senses we have the knowledge of our sensations only, and of nothing else. Grant this, and the conclusion is irresistible.—" For my own part" (he adds) " I once believed this doctrine of ideas so firmly, as to embrace the whole of " Berkeley's system in consequence of it; till finding some consequences to follow from " it, which gave me more uneasiness than the want of a material world, it came into my " mind, more than forty years ago, to put the question, what evidence have I for this doc- " trine, that all the objects of my knowledge are ideas in my own mind? From that time " to the present, I have been candidly and impartially, as I think, seeking for the evidence " of this principle, but can find none, excepting the authority of philosophers."

We are told, in the life of Dr Berkeley, that, after the publication of his book, he had an interview with Dr Clarke; in the course of which, Clarke discovered a manifest unwillingness to enter into the discussion about the existence of matter, and was accused by Berkeley of a want of candour.—The story has every appearance of truth; for as Clarke, in common with his antagonist, regarded the *ideal theory* as incontrovertible, it

was perfectly impossible for him, with all his acuteness, to detect the flaw to which Berkeley's paradox owed its plausibility.

## NOTE (F), P. 55.

In order to demonstrate the repugnance of the ideal theory to *fact*, Dr Reid observes, that, in its fundamental assumption, it confounds our *sensations* and *perceptions* together*; overlooking altogether the *sensations* by which the primary qualities of matter are made known to us. Berkeley says, *that by the senses we have no knowledge but of our sensations only*; and Locke, that *the primary qualities of body are* RESEMBLANCES *of our sensations, though the secondary are not.* Now, upon this point we may venture to appeal to every man's consciousness. Can any person doubt, that he has clear notions of *extension* and of *figure*, which form the subjects of the proudest and most beautiful system of demonstrated truths, yet brought to light by human reason? Indeed, what notions can be mentioned, more definite and satisfactory than what we possess, of these two qualities? And what resemblance can either bear to the changes which take place in the state of a sentient being? That we *have* notions of external qualities which have no resemblance to our sensations, or to any thing of which the mind is *conscious*, is therefore *a fact* of which every man's experience affords the completest evidence; and to which it is not possible to oppose a single objection, but its incompatibility with the common philosophical theories concerning the origin of our knowledge.

The idea of Extension (without having recourse to any other), furnishes, of itself, an *experimentum crucis* for the determination of this question. The argument which it affords against the truth of the ideal theory is very forcibly stated by Dr Reid, in a passage, the greater part of which I intended to have transcribed here, in order to excite the curiosity of my readers with respect to the work in which it is detailed at length. As I am prevented, however, from doing so by want of room, I must request such of them as

* *Sensation* properly expresses *that change in the state of the mind*, which is produced by an impression upon an organ of sense; (of which change we can conceive the mind to be conscious, without any knowledge of external objects): *Perception* on the other hand, expresses *the knowledge* or the *intimations* we obtain, by means of our sensations, concerning the qualities of matter; and, consequently, involves, in every instance, the notion of *externality* or *outness*, which it is necessary to exclude, as much as possible, from the thought, in order to seize the precise import of the word *sensation*. See Outlines of Moral Philosophy, § 14. (Edinburgh, 1808.)

For a fuller illustration of this distinction, I must refer to Dr Reid. A clear conception of it (as he has himself remarked) is the key to all that he has written in opposition to the Berkeleian system. Priestley, through the whole of his strictures on Reid, studiously employs the two words as synonymous terms.

have any relish for these speculations, to study with care the 5th and 6th sections of the 5th chapter of his Inquiry into the Human Mind; also the paragraph in the 7th section of the same chapter, beginning with the words, "This, I would therefore humbly pro- "pose, as an *experimentum crucis*," &c. They are not to be comprehended fully without a considerable effort of patient reflection; but they are within the reach of any person of plain understanding, who will submit to this trouble; and they lead to very important consequences in the philosophy of the human mind.

After the long interval which has elapsed since the first publication of this book, I should despair of reviving any degree of attention to the subject, if I did not recollect the opposition and the neglect which all those truths have had, in the first instance, to encounter, which are now regarded as the great pillars of modern philosophy.—I was anxious, at the same time, to bring into immediate contrast the statement which was given by this author, fifty years ago, of the incompatibility of our ideas of *extension, figure,* and *motion,* with the received systems concerning the sources of our knowledge; and the indistinct pointings towards the same conclusion, which have since appeared in the writings of Kant and others. The noise which this doctrine has made, in consequence of the mysterious veil under which they have disguised it, when compared with the public inattention to the simple and luminous reasonings of Reid, affords one of the most remarkable instances I know, of that weak admiration, which the half-learned are always ready to bestow on whatever they find themselves unable to comprehend. But on these and some collateral topics, I shall have an opportunity of explaining myself more fully in a subsequent note.

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To those who take an interest in tracing the progress of philosophical speculation, it may not be unacceptable to know, that although Reid was indisputably the first who saw clearly the important consequences involved in the downfal of the ideal theory, yet various hints towards its refutation, may be collected from earlier writers. So far from considering this anticipation as having any tendency to lower his merits, I wish to point it out to my readers, as a proof of the sagacity with which he perceived the various and extensive applications to be made of a conclusion, which, in the hands of his predecessors, was altogether sterile and useless. My own conviction, at the same time, is, that the passages I am now to quote, were either unknown to Dr Reid, or had altogether escaped his recollection, when he wrote his Inquiry. They exhibit, in fact, nothing more than momentary glimpses of the truth, afforded by some casual light which immediately disappeared, leaving the traveller to wander in the same darkness as before.

The following sentence in Dr Hutcheson's Treatise on the Passions, considering the period at which the author wrote, reflects the highest honour on his metaphysical acuteness: "Extension, figure, motion, and rest, seem to be more properly *ideas* accompa- "nying the sensations of sight and touch, than the *sensations* of either of those senses." —It does not appear from any reference which he afterwards makes to this distinction, that he was at all aware of its value.

The learned and judicious Crousaz, who wrote a little prior to Hutcheson, expresses himself nearly to the same purpose; and even dwells on the distinction at some length. In the following passage, I have taken no other liberty with the original, but that of suppressing some superfluous words and clauses, with which the author has loaded his statement and obscured his meaning. The clauses, however, which I omit, and still more the preceding context, will satisfy any person who may take the trouble to examine them, that although he seems to have had Reid's fundamental principle fairly within his reach, he saw it too indistinctly to be able to trace its consequences, or even to convey its import very clearly to the minds of others.

"When we would represent to ourselves something *without* us, and which resembles "a sensation, it is evident that we pursue a mere chimera. A sensation can represent "nothing but a sensation: And sensation, being a species of thought, can represent no- "thing which belongs to a subject incapable of thinking. It is not so with the objects "of our perceptions. When I think of a tree or of a triangle, I know the objects, to "which I give these names, to be different from my thoughts, and to have no resemblance "to them.—*The fact is wonderful, but it is not the less incontestible.*"

In Baxter's Treatise on the Immateriality of the Soul, the same observation is not only repeated, but is employed expressly for the refutation of the Berkeleian system. It is, however, worthy of remark, that this ingenious writer has pushed his conclusion farther than he was warranted to do by his premises; and indeed farther than his own argument required.

"If our ideas have no parts, and yet if we *perceive* parts, it is plain we *perceive some-* "*thing more than our own perceptions.* But both these are certain: we are conscious "that we perceive parts, when we look upon a house, a tree, a river, the dial-plate of a "clock or watch. *This is a short* and *easy way of being certain that something exists* "*without the mind.*"—(V. II. p. 313.)

It is evident, that *the fact* here stated, furnishes no positive proof of the existence of external objects. It only destroys the force of Berkeley's reasonings *against the possibility* of their existence, by its obvious incompatibility with the fundamental principle on which all these reasonings proceed.—The inference, therefore, which Berkeley *ought* to have drawn was this; that by our sensations we *do* receive notions of qualities which

bear no resemblance to these sensations; and consequently, that Berkeley's reasonings are good for nothing, being founded on a false hypothesis. This is precisely Reid's argument; and it is somewhat curious that Baxter, after having got possession of the premises, was not aware of the important consequences to which they lead.

Of all the writers, however, who touched upon this subject, prior to the publication of Reid's Inquiry, none seems to have had a clearer perception of the truth, or to have expressed it with greater precision, than D'Alembert. "It is doubtless" (he observes in one passage) "by the sense of touch we are enabled to distinguish our own "bodies from surrounding objects; but *how* does it convey to us the notion of that *con-* "*tinuity* of parts in which consists properly the notion of *extension?* Here is a problem "on which, it appears to me, that philosophy is able to throw a very imperfect light. "——In a word, the sensation by means of which we arrive at the knowledge of *extension* "is, in its nature, as incomprehensible as extension itself."—(*Elemens de la Philosophie*, Article Metaphysique.) On a different occasion, the same writer has remarked, that, "as no relation whatever can be discovered between a sensation in the mind, and the ob- "ject by which it is occasioned, or at least to which we refer it, there does not seem to "be a possibility of tracing, by dint of reasoning, any practical passage from the one to "the other." And hence he is led to ascribe our belief of the existence of things external to "a species of *instinct;*"—"a principle" (he adds) "more sure in its operation "than reason itself."

In direct opposition to the fact which D'Alembert has thus not only admitted, but pointed out to his readers as involving a mystery not to be explained, it is astonishing to find him expressing, again and again, in different parts of his works, his complete acquiescence in Locke's doctrine, *that all our ideas are derived from our sensations;* and that it is impossible for us to think of any thing which has no resemblance to something previously known to us by our own consciousness. The remarks, accordingly, just quoted from him, are nowhere turned to any account in his subsequent reasonings.

All these passages reflect light on Reid's philosophy, and afford evidence, that the difficulty on which he has laid so great stress, with respect to the transition made by the mind from its sensations to a knowledge of the primary qualities of matter, is by no means (as Priestley and some others have asserted) the offspring of his own imagination. They prove, at the same time, that none of the authors from whom I have borrowed them, with the single exception of Baxter, have availed themselves of this difficulty to destroy the foundations of Berkeley's scheme of Idealism; and that Baxter himself was as unapprised as the others, of the extensive applications of which it is susceptible to various other questions connected with the philosophy of the human mind. The celebrated German professor, Emanuel Kant, seems at last to have got a glimpse of this,

notwithstanding the scholastic fog through which he delights to view every object to which he turns his attention. As his writings, however, were of a much later date than those of Dr Reid, they do not properly fall under our consideration in this note: And, at any rate, I must not now add to its length, by entering upon a topic of such extent and difficulty.

## NOTE (G), P. 55.

The following strictures on Reid's reasonings against the ideal theory occur in a work published by Dr Priestley in 1774.

"Before our author had rested so much upon this argument, it behoved him, I think, "to have examined the strength of it a little more carefully than he seems to have done: "for he appears to me to have suffered himself to be misled in the very foundation of it, "merely by philosophers happening to call ideas the *images* of external things; *as if* "*this was not known to be a figurative expression*, denoting, *not* that the actual shapes "of things were delineated in the brain, or upon the mind, but only that impressions of "some kind or other were conveyed to the mind by means of the organs of sense and "their corresponding nerves, and that between these impressions and the sensations ex- "isting in the mind, there is a real and necessary, though at present an unknown con- "nection."

To those who have perused the metaphysical writings of Berkeley and of Hume, the foregoing passage cannot fail to appear much too ludicrous to deserve a serious answer. Do not all the reasonings which have been deduced from Locke's philosophy against the independent existence of the material world hinge on that very principle which Priestley affects to consider as merely an accidental mode of speaking, never meant to be understood literally? Where did he learn that the philosophers who have "happened to call "ideas the *images* of external things," employed this term "as a figurative expression, "denoting, not that the actual shapes of things were delineated in the brain or upon the "mind, but only, that impressions of some kind or other were conveyed to the mind by "means of the organs of sense and their corresponding nerves?" Has not Mr Locke expressly told us, that "the ideas of primary qualities of bodies are *resemblances* of them, and "that their *patterns* do really exist in the bodies themselves; but that the ideas produced in us by secondary qualities have no resemblance of them at all*?" And did not Mr Hume understand this doctrine of Locke in the most strict and literal meaning of the

* Vol. I. p. 99, 13th edit. of his Essays.

words, when he stated, as one of its necessary consequences, "That the mind either is no "substance, or that it is an extended and divisible substance; because the *ideas* of ex- "tension cannot be in a subject which is indivisible and unextended *."

But why should I refer, on this occasion, to Hume or to Locke, when quotations to the very same purpose are furnished by various writers of a much later date? The following is from a book published in 1782.

"It will not be disputed, but that sensations or *ideas* properly exist *in the soul*, be- "cause it could not otherwise retain them so as to continue to perceive and think after "its separation from the body. Now, whatever ideas are in themselves, they are evident- "ly produced by external objects, and must therefore correspond to them; and since "many of the objects or archetypes of ideas are divisible, it necessarily follows, that the "ideas themselves are divisible also. The idea of a *man*, for instance, could in *no sense* "correspond to a man, which is the archetype of it, and THEREFORE COULD NOT BE THE "IDEA OF A MAN, if it did not consist of the ideas of his *head*, *arms*, *trunk*, *legs*, &c. It "therefore consists of parts, and consequently, is divisible. And how is it possible, "that a thing (be the nature of it what it may) that is *divisible*, should be contained in "a substance, be the nature of it likewise what it may, that is *indivisible*?

"If the archetypes of ideas have extension, the ideas *expressive* of them must have ex- "tension likewise; and therefore the mind, in which they exist, whether it be material or "immaterial, must have extension also."

It will surprise and amuse some of my readers, as a specimen of the precipitation and inconsistency of Dr Priestley, when they learn, that the passage just quoted, is extracted from his *disquisitions on matter and spirit*, published eight years after his attack on Dr Reid. No form of words could have conveyed a more unqualified sanction than he has here given to the old hypothesis concerning *ideas*;—a hypothesis which he had before asserted to have been never considered by any philosopher, but as a figurative mode of ex-

* "The most vulgar philosophy informs us, that no external object can make itself known to the mind "immediately, and without the interposition of an image or perception. That table, which just now ap- "pears to me, is only a perception, and all its qualities are qualities of a perception. Now, the most ob- "vious of all its qualities is extension. The perception consists of parts. These parts are so situated, as "to afford us the notion of distance and contiguity; of length, breadth, and thickness. The termination of "these three dimensions is what we call figure. This figure is moveable, separable, and divisible. Mobi- "lity and separability are the distinguishing properties of extended objects. And to cut short all disputes, "the very *idea* of extension is *copied* from nothing but an impression, and consequently must *perfectly agree* "*to it*. To say the idea of extension agrees to any thing, is to say it is extended."

"The free-thinker may now triumph in his turn; and having found there are impressions and ideas real- "ly extended, may ask his antagonists, how they can incorporate a simple and indivisible subject with an "extended perception?"—(Treatise of Human Nature, Vol. I. pp. 416, 417.)

pression; and which, when viewed in the light of a theory, he had represented as an absurdity too palpable to deserve a serious refutation.

The ignorance which Priestley, and his associates of the Hartleian school, have discovered of the history of a branch of philosophy which they have presumed to decide upon with so much dogmatism, renders it necessary for me to remark once more, in this place, that the IDEAS of Des Cartes, and of his successors, were little else (at least so far as *perception* is concerned) than a new name for the *species* of the schoolmen;—the various ambiguities connected with the word *idea*, having probably contributed not a little to shelter the doctrine, in its more modern dress, against those objections to which it must, at a much earlier period, have appeared to be liable, if the old peripatetic phraseology had been retained.

The following passage from Hobbes, while it demonstrates the prevalence, at no very distant period, in its most absurd form, of the dogma which Reid has combated, may serve to illustrate, at the same time, the inefficacy of reason and common sense, when opposed to an established prejudice.

"The Philosophy Schools, through all the Universities of Christendom, grounded "upon certain texts of Aristotle, teach, that, for the cause of *vision*, the thing seen "sendeth forth, on every side, a *visible species*, (in English,) a *visible shew*, *apparition*, "or *aspect*, or *a being seen;* the receiving whereof into the eye, is *seeing*. And for the "cause of *hearing*, that the thing heard sendeth forth an *audible species*, that is, an "*audible aspect*, or *audible being seen*; which entering at the ear, maketh *hearing*. "Nay, for the cause of *understanding*, also, they say the thing understood sendeth forth "an *intelligible species*, that is, *an intelligible being seen;* which coming into the under-"standing makes us understand."—"I say not this" (continues Hobbes) "as disap-"proving of the use of Universities, but because, as I am to speak hereafter of their office "in a commonwealth, I must let you see, on all occasions, by the way, what things "should be amended in them, *amongst which, the frequency of insignificant speech is* "*one*."—(Of Man, Part I. Chap. i.)

About 150 years ago, when the dreams of the cloister were beginning to vanish before the dawning light of experimental science, the arguments which the schoolmen were obliged to have recourse to in their own defence, afford a commentary on the real import of their dogmas, which we should search for in vain in the publications of those ages when they were regarded as oracles of truth, which it was the business of the philosopher not to dispute, but to unriddle. With this view, I shall extract a few remarks from a vindication of the Aristotelian doctrines, in opposition to some discourses of Sir Kenelm Digby, by an author of considerable celebrity among his contemporaries; but who is indebted chiefly for the small portion of fame, which he now enjoys, to a couplet of Hudibras. The aim

of the reasonings which I am to quote is to shew, as the author himself informs us, that *objects work not materially, but intentionally on the sense;* and notwithstanding the buffoonery blended with them, they may be regarded as an authentic exposition of the scholastic opinion on this memorable question; a question which *Alexander Ross* appears to have studied as carefully, and as successfully, as any of the writers who have since undertaken the task of resolving it.

"The atoms are your sanctuary to which you fly upon all occasions. For you will "now have these material parts of bodies work upon the outward organs of the senses, "and, passing through them, mingle themselves with the spirits, and so to the brain. "These little parts must needs get in at the doors of our bodies, and mingle themselves "with the spirits in the nerves, and, of necessity, must make some motion in the brain. "Doubtless, if this be true, there must needs be an incredible motion in the brain; for, "if the atoms of two armies fighting should rush into your brain by the eye, they will "make a greater motion than Minerva did in Jupiter's brain. You would call for a "Vulcan to cleave your head, and let out those armed men, who would cause a greater "struggling in your head than the twins did in Rebecca's womb: For I do not think "these little myrmidons would lie so quiet in your brain as the Grecians did in the Tro"jan horse. But, if the material atoms of the object pierce the organ; as, for example, "of a horse; then tell us, how many atoms must meet to make up a little horse; and "how can that horse, being bridled and saddled, pierce your eye without hurting it, es"pecially if you should see mounted on his back such a gallant as *St George*, armed with "a long sharp lance; or Bellerophon on Pegasus? And if a thousand eyes should look "at one time upon that object, will it not be much lessened, by losing so many atoms "and parts, as enter into so many eyes?—Or can the object multiply itself by diminu"tion, as the five loaves did in the gospel?—Or, suppose you should see as many horses "at a time as were in Xerxes his army, would there be stable-room enough in your "brain to contain them all?—Or, if you should see a thousand horses, one after another, "doth the coming in of the latter drive out the former?—Which way do they come "out?—The same way they went in?—Or some other way?—Or do they stable alto"gether there?—Or do they die in the brain?—Will they not perish the brain, and poi"son your optic spirits, with which you say they are mingled?—Or, suppose you "should see, in a looking-glass, a horse; doth the atoms of that horse pierce first the glass "to get in, and then break through the glass again to get into your eye? Sure, if this "be your *new philosophy*, you are likely to have but few sectaries of these deambulatory "wise men, whom you call vulgar philosophers *. Is it not easier, and more consonant

* Compare this with Dr Beattie's attempts at pleasantry on the very theory which Alexander Ross considered as indisputable.

"to reason, that the *image or representation of the object* be received into the sense, "which reception we call *sensation*, than to say, that the *very material parts* which you "call *atoms*, should pierce the organ? for then the same object must be both one and "many; and so, if all the inhabitants of either hemisphere should look at once on the "moon, there must be as many moons as beholders.

"Again, we distinguish that which you confound, to wit, first, the organ which is "called *sensorium*: secondly, the *sensitive* faculty, which resides in the spirits: thirdly, "the act of *sensation*, which is caused by the object: fourthly, the *object* itself which "causeth sensation, but not the sense or faculty itself: fifthly, the *species which is the* "*image of the object*: sixthly, the *medium*, which is air, water, &c.: seventhly, the "*sensitive soul*, actuating the organ, and in it judging and perceiving the object, which "diffuses and sends its *species*, or *spiritual* and *intentional qualities*, both into the me- "dium and the sensorium; *and this is no more impossible, than for the wax to receive* "*the impressions or figure of the seal, without any of its matter**."

From this precious relic of scholastic subtilty, we learn, 1st, that the author conceived the *species* by means of which perception is obtained to be really *images or representations* of external objects; 2d, that he conceived these *species* to be altogether *unembodied*; 3d, that the chief ground of difference between him and his opponent consisted in this, that while the one supposed the *species* to be *immaterial*, the other fancied them to be composed of *atoms* which enter by the organs of sense, and "make some motion in the brain." In this respect, Sir Kenelm Digby's hypothesis seems to be merely a revival of the old Epicurean doctrine with respect to the *tenuia rerum simulacra*; which Lucretius plainly considered as *images* or *resemblances* of sensible qualities; perfectly analogous to the *species* of the peripatetics in every particular but this, that they were supposed to partake of the *matter* as well as of the *form* of their respective archetypes.

In the present state of science, when the phraseology of the schoolmen is universally laid aside; and more especially, since the time that the absurdity of their theory of perception has been so fully exposed by Dr Reid, it is very easy to argue from this absurdity against the probability that the theory was ever matter of general and serious belief. It is easy, for example, to ask what notion it was possible to annex to the words *image* or *representation*, when applied to the sensible *species*, by which we perceive hardness or softness, roughness or smoothness, heat or cold? The question is surely a very pertinent one, and, to all appearance, sufficiently obvious; but it does not therefore follow, that it was ever asked, or that it would have produced much impression, if it had been asked,

*The Philosophical Touch-stone, or Observations upon Sir Kenelm Digby's Discourses of the Nature of Bodies, and of the Rational Soul. By Alexander Ross, London, 1645.

during the scholastic ages. Such is the influence of words upon the most acute understandings, that when the *language* of a sect has once acquired a systematical coherence and consistency, the imposing plausibility of the dress in which their doctrines are exhibited, is not only likely to draw a veil, impenetrable to most eyes, over many of the inconsistencies of *thought* which they may involve, but to give a dexterous advocate infinite advantages in defending and vindicating these inconsistencies, if they should be brought under discussion.—When, on the other hand, this technical language has been supplanted by a different phraseology, and when the particular dogmas which it was employed to support come to be examined in separated and unconnected detail, error and absurdity carry along with them the materials of their own refutation; and the mysterious garb, under which they formerly escaped detection, serves only to expose them to additional ridicule. Such has, in fact, been the case with the scholastic theory of perception, which, after maintaining its ground, without any dispute, during a succession of centuries, is now represented as an extravagance of too great a magnitude, to have been ever understood by its abettors in the literal sense which their words convey. It would be happy for science, if some of those who have lately expressed themselves in this manner, did not conceal from superficial readers, and probably from themselves also, under a different, but equally hypothetical form of words, the very same fundamental mistake which revolts their judgment so strongly, when presented to them in terms to which they have not been accustomed.

The theory of Digby, too, when contrasted with that of his antagonist, is a historical document of considerable importance; exhibiting a specimen of the first attacks made on the system of the schoolmen, by the partizans of the new philosophy. The substitution of *material* images, instead of the ambiguous and mysterious *species* of Aristotle, by forcing the peripatetics to speak out their meaning a little more explicitly, did more to bring them into discredit, than the most acute and conclusive arguments of their opponents.———Much about the same time, Dr Hooke expressed himself not less decidedly about the *materiality of ideas or images;* employing a mode of speaking on this subject not very unlike that of Dr Darwin. Priestley's language is somewhat different from this, being faithfully modelled after the hypothesis of his master, Dr Hartley. "If (says he) "as Hartley supposes, the nerves and brain be a vibrating substance, *all sensations* "*and ideas are vibrations in that substance;* and all that is properly unknown in the "business, is the power of the mind to perceive or be affected with these vibrations." In what manner Dr Priestley would have reconciled this inference with what I have already quoted from him with respect to the *idea* of extension, I presume not to conjecture.

As a farther illustration of the notions which were prevalent with respect to the na-

ture of *sensible species*, and *that* little more than a century ago, I shall quote a passage from a treatise, which, notwithstanding its unpromising subject, was evidently the work of an author,—deeply tainted, indeed, with the prejudices of his country and of his age, but of no inconsiderable learning and ingenuity. The treatise I allude to is entitled, "ΔΕΥΤΕΡΟΣΚΟΠΙΑ, or a Brief Discourse concerning the Second Sight, commonly so "called. By the Rev. Mr John Frazer, deceased, late minister of Tirrie and Coll, and "Dean of the Isles." (Edinburgh, printed by Mr Andrew Symson, 1707.)

The passage seems to me to deserve preservation, as a memorial of the state of Scotish philosophy towards the end of the 17th century; and I willingly give it a place here, as the book from which it is extracted is not likely to fall in the way of many of my readers.

After mentioning a variety of anecdotes, concerning the illusions of imagination to which hypochondriacal persons are liable, when in a state of solitude, the author proceeds thus:—

"If you will ask, how cometh this to pass? Take notice of the following method, "which I humbly offer to your consideration. Advert, in the first place, that visible "*ideas* or *species** are emitted from every visible object to the organ of the eye, repre- "senting the figure and colour of the object, and bearing along with it the proportion "of the distance; for sure, the objects enter not the eye, nor the interjacent track "of ground. And a *third thing*, different from the eye and the object, and the distant "ground, must inform the eye. The *species* are conveyed to the brain by the optic "nerve, and are laid up in the magazine of the memory; otherwise, we should not "remember the object any longer than it is in our presence, and a remembering of those "objects is nothing else but the fancy's receiving, or more properly, the soul of man by "the fancy receiving, these *intentional species* formerly received from the visible object "into the organ of the eye, and recondited into the seat of the memory. Now, when the "brain is in a serene temper, these species are in their integrity, and keep their rank and "file as they were received; but when the brain is filled with gross and flatuous vapours, "and the spirits and humours enraged, these ideas are sometimes multiplied, sometimes "magnified, sometimes misplaced, sometimes confounded by other species of different "objects, &c. &c. and this deception is not only incident to the fancy, but even to the "external senses, particularly the seeing and hearing. For the *visus*, or seeing, is nothing "else but the transition of the intentional species through the crystalline humour to

* In consequence of the growing influence of the Cartesian philosophy, these words were then beginning to be regarded as synonymous.

"the retiform coat of the eye, and judged by the *common sense*, and conveyed by the "optic nerve to the fancy."

* * * *

"Now, if these species formerly received and laid up in the brain, will be *reversed* "back from the same to the retiform coat and crystalline humour as formerly, there is, "in effect, a lively seeing and perception of the object represented by these species, as if "*de novo* the object had been placed before the eye; for the organ of the eye had no "more of it before than now it has. Just so with the hearing: it is nothing else but the "receiving of the *audible species* to that part of the ear that is accommodated for hear- "ing; so that when the *species* are retracted from the brain to their proper organs (for "example, the ear and the eye), hearing and seeing are perfected, as if the objects had "been present to influence the organ *de novo*. And it is not to be thought that this is "a singular opinion. For Cardanus, an eminent author of great and universal reading "and experience, maintains this *reversion of the species*, and attributes his own vision of "trees, wild-beasts, men, cities, and instructed battles, musical and martial instruments, "from the fourth to the seventh year of his age, to the *species* of the objects he had "seen formerly, now retracted to the organ of the eye; and cites Averroes, an author "of greater renown, for the same opinion." (See Cardanus *de Subtilitate rerum* p. 301.)

"And it seems truly to be founded upon relevant grounds. I have observed a sick "person that complained of great pain and molestation in his head, and particularly of "piping and sweet singing in his ears; which seems to have been caused by the *species of* "*piping and singing* which he had formerly heard; but were now, through the plethory "of his head, forced out of the brain to the organ of the ear, through the same nerve by "which they were received formerly; and why may not the same befal the *visible spe-* "*cies* as well as the *audible?* which seems to be confirmed by this optic experiment: "Take a sheet of painted paper, and fix it in your window, looking stedfastly to it for "a considerable time; then close your eyes very strait, and open your eyes suddenly, "you will see the paintings almost as lively as they were in the painted sheet, with the "lively colours. This compression of the eyes, by consent causes a compression of "the whole brain, which forces back the *visible species* of the painted sheet to the organ "of the eye through the optic nerve, which will presently evanish if the reflectant did "not help to preserve them. You may see then how much of these representations may "be within ourselves, abstracting from any external agent or object, without the eye to "influence the same."

Were it not for the credulity displayed by Mr Frazer, in various parts of his book, one would almost be tempted to consider the foregoing theory as the effort of a superior mind combating the superstitious prejudices of his age, with such weapons as the erroneo-

ous philosophy of that age could supply. Perhaps the spirit of the times did not allow him to carry his scepticism farther than he did. A Lord President of our Supreme Court in Scotland (one of the most eminent and accomplished men whom this country has produced) is said to have been an advocate for this article of popular faith more than fifty years afterwards.

## NOTE (H), Pp. 63, 64.

In the passage from Locke, quoted in the foot-note, p. 63, a hint is given (very unworthy of his good sense) towards a new theory of the creation of matter. It is a remarkable circumstance, that a theory on the same subject was suggested to Priestley by certain speculations of his own, approaching very nearly to the doctrines of Boscovich; a coincidence which strikes me as a strong additional presumption in favour of that interpretation which I have given to Locke's words.

"I will add in this place, though it will be considered more fully hereafter, that this "supposition of matter having (besides extension) no other properties but those of at- "traction and repulsion, greatly relieves the difficulty which attends the supposition "of the *creation of it out of nothing*, and also the continual moving of it, by a being "who has hitherto been supposed to have no common property with it. For, accord- "ing to this hypothesis, both the creating mind, and the created substance, are equally "destitute of *solidity* or *impenetrability;* so that there can be no difficulty whatever in "supposing, that the latter may have been the offspring of the former."—Disquisitions on Matter and Spirit, Vol. I. p. 23. (Birmingham, 1782.)

## NOTE (I), P. 90.

Notwithstanding the apology which I have offered for the word *instinct*, as it has been sometimes employed by writers on the Human Mind, I am perfectly sensible that it has been used, on various occasions, even by our most profound reasoners, with too great a degree of latitude. Examples of this might be produced, both from Mr Hume and Mr Smith; but I shall confine myself, in this note, to a passage from Dr Reid (by whose phraseology I was led to introduce the subject at present) in which he gives the name of *instinct* to the sudden effort we make to recover our balance, when in danger of falling; and to certain other instantaneous exertions which we make for our own preservation, in circumstances of unexpected danger.—(See his Essays on the Active Powers of Man, p. 174. 4to. edit.)

In this particular instance, I agree perfectly (excepting in one single point) with the following very judicious remarks long ago made by Gravesande:

" Il y a quelque chose d'admirable dans le moyen ordinaire dont les hommes se ser-
" vent, pour s'empêcher de tomber: car dans le tems que, par quelque mouvement, le
" poids du corps s'augmente d'un côté, un autre mouvement rétablit l'equilibre dans
" l'instant. On attribue communément la chose à *un instinct naturel*, quoiqu'il faille
" necessairement l'attribuer à *un art* perfectionné par l'exercice.

" Les enfans ignorent absolument cet art dans les premières années de leur vie; ils l'ap-
" prennent peu à peu, et s'y perfectionnent, parce qu'ils ont continuellement occasion
" de s'y exercer; exercice qui, dans la suite, n'exige presque plus aucune attention de
" leur part; tout comme un musicien remue les doigts, suivant les regles de l'art, pendant
" qu'il apperçoit à peine qu'il y fasse la moindre attention."—(Oeuvres Philosophiques de M. 'SGravesande, p. 121. Seconde Partie. Amsterdam, 1774.)

The only thing I am disposed to object to in this extract, is that clause where the author ascribes the effort in question to *an art*. Is it not manifestly as wide of the truth to refer it to *this* source as to pure instinct?

The word *art* implies intelligence; the perception of an *end*, and the choice of *means*. But where is there any appearance of either, in an operation common to the whole species (not excluding the idiot and the insane);—and which is practised as successfully by the brutes, as by those who are possessed of reason.

I intend to propose some modifications of the usual modes of speaking concerning this class of phenomena, when I come to contrast the faculties of Man with those of the lower animals.

## NOTE (K), P. 95.

Want of room obliges me to omit, at present, the illustrations destined for this note; and to refer to some remarks on secondary qualities, in the Philosophy of the Human Mind. See note (P), at the end of that work; where I have attempted to explain the reference we make of the sensation of *colour*, to the external object; the only difficulty which the subject seems to me to present, and of which neither Dr Reid nor Mr Smith have been sufficiently aware. (See Reid's Inquiry into the Human Mind; and the Essay on the External Senses, in Mr Smith's Posthumous Work.) Both of these writers have, in my opinion, been led to undervalue this part of the Cartesian Philosophy, by the equivocal use made in the common statements of it, of the names of secondary qualities; a circumstance which had long before been ably commented on by Malebranche.——— D'Alembert saw the difficulty in all its extent, when he observed (speaking of the sensa-

tion of colour): "Rien n'est peut-être plus extraordinaire dans les operations de no-
"tre âme, que de la voir transporter hors d'elle-même et étendre, pour ainsi dire, ses
"sensations sur une substance à laquelle elles ne peuvent appartenir."

Berkeley has made a dexterous and amusing use of this very curious mental phenomenon, to prove that his scheme of idealism was perfectly consonant to the common apprehensions of mankind.

"Perhaps, upon a strict inquiry, we shall not find, that even those who from their
"birth have grown up in a continued habit of seeing, are irrecoverably prejudiced on the
"other side, to wit, in thinking what they see to be at a distance from them. For at
"this time it seems agreed on all hands, by those who have had any thoughts of that mat-
"ter, that *colours*, which are the proper and immediate objects of sight, are not without
"the mind. But then *it will be said*, by sight we have also the ideas of extension, and
"figure, and motion; all which may well be thought *without*, and at some distances
"from the mind, though colour should not. In answer to this, I appeal to any man's
"experience, whether the visible extension of any object doth not appear *as near* to him
"as the colour of that object; nay, whether they do not both seem to be in the very
"same place. Is not the extension we see coloured, and is it possible for us, so much as
"in thought, to separate and abstract colour from extension? Now, where the exten-
"sion is, there surely is the figure, and there the motion too.—I speak of those which
"are perceived by sight."—(Essay towards a New Theory of Vision, p. 255.)

## NOTE (L), P. 100.

I intended to have introduced here, some doubts and queries with respect to the origin, or rather to the history of the notion of Extension; not with any view to an explanation of a fact which I consider, with the eminent philosophers referred to in the text, as altogether unaccountable; but to direct the attention of my readers to a more accurate examination than has been *hitherto* attempted, of the *occasions* on which this notion or idea is at first formed by the mind. Whatever light can be thrown on this very obscure subject may be regarded as a valuable accession to the natural history of the human understanding.

It was long ago remarked by Dr Reid, (and indeed by other writers of a still earlier date) that to account for the idea of Extension by the motion of *the hand*, is a paralogism, as this supposes a *previous* knowledge of the existence of our own bodies.

Condillac does not appear to have been sufficiently aware of this; nor even that most acute and profound philosopher, the late Mr Smith. In his Essay on the External Senses (published in his posthumous volume), he all along supposes the mind in possession of the

idea for the origin of which he is attempting to account. How do we get the notion of what Mr Smith calls *externality*, and Berkeley *outness*? Is not this only a particular modification of the idea of *extension*?

The same remark may be applied to some late speculations on this subject, by M. Destutt-Tracy. They are evidently the result of great depth and refinement of thought; but, like those of Mr Smith, they will be found, on an accurate examination, to involve what logicians call *a petitio principii*.

I am strongly inclined, at the same time, to think, that the idea of *extension* involves the idea of *motion*; or to express myself more explicitly, that our *first* notions of extension are acquired by the effort of moving the hands over the surfaces of bodies, and by the effort of *moving* our own bodies from place to place. The reference which Smith and Destutt-Tracy, as well as many earlier inquirers have made to *the motion of the hand*, in their attempts to clear up this mystery, furnishes a strong presumption, that *motion* is somehow or other concerned in the business. I differ from them only in this: that whereas they seem to have considered their theory as affording some explanation of the *origin* of the idea, to me it appears, if well-founded, to exhibit this problem in a form still more manifestly insolvable than that in which it is commonly viewed.

From the following query of Berkeley's, it may be inferred what his opinion was on the point in question. "Whether it be possible, that we should have had an idea or "notion of Extension prior to Motion? Or whether, if a man had never perceived "Motion, he would ever have known or conceived one thing to be distant from "another?"

To this query I have already said, that I am disposed to reply in the negative; although, in doing so, I would be understood to express myself with the greatest possible diffidence. *One* observation, however, I may add, without the slighest hesitation, that if the idea of Extension pre-supposes that of Motion, it must, of necessity, pre-suppose also that of Time.

The prosecution of this last remark has led me into some speculations, which appear to myself to be interesting; but to which I find it impossible to give a place in this volume.

## NOTE (M), P. 114.

"Tous les systèmes possibles sur la génération des idées, peuvent être rappelés, *quant* "*à leur principe fondamentale*, à cette simple alternative; ou toutes nos idées ont leur "origine dans les impressions des sens; ou il y a des idées qui n'ont point leur origine "dans ces impressions, et par consequent qui sont placées dans l'ame immédiatement, et "qui lui appartiennent en vertu de sa seule nature.

"Ainsi les opinions des philosophes anciens ou modernes sur la generation des idées, "se placeront d'elles même sur deux lignes opposées; celles des philosophes qui ont "adopté le principe, *nihil est in intellectu quin prius fuerit in sensu;* celles des philo- "sophes qui ont cru aux idées innées, ou inhérentes à l'intelligence."—De la Generation des Connoissances Humaines, pp. 8 et 9. (A Berlin, 1802).

## NOTE (N), P. 119.

I have substituted the words *consciousness and perception*, instead of the *sensation and reflection* of Locke, for two reasons: 1. Because *sensation* does not, in strict philosophical propriety, or, at least, not in a manner quite unequivocal, express the meaning which Locke intended to convey; the knowledge, to wit, which we obtain by means of our senses, of the qualities of matter: 2. Because *reflection* cannot, according to Locke's own use of the term, be contrasted either with *sensation* or *perception;* inasmuch as it denotes an operation of the *intellect*, directing its attention to the subjects of *consciousness;* and bearing to that power the same relation in which *observation* stands to *perception.*

I must own, at the same time, that I could never assent entirely to the justness of the following criticism on Locke's classification, which occurs in the conclusion of Dr Reid's Inquiry into the Human Mind. "The division of our notions into ideas of sensation, "and ideas of reflection, is contrary to all rules of Logic; because the second member "of the division includes the first. For, can we form clear and just notions of our sen- "sations any other way than by reflection? Surely we cannot. Sensation is an opera- "tion of the mind of which we are conscious; and we get the notion of sensation by "reflecting upon that which we are conscious of."

That this criticism would have been perfectly just, if Locke had used the words *sensation* and *reflection*, in the definite and precise acceptations invariably annexed to them in Reid's writings, must undoubtedly be granted. Nay, I am inclined to think, that it applies nearly to Locke's own opinion, when interpreted according to some subsequent applications which he himself has made of it; and which, by resolving every thing into the evidence of consciousness, have an obvious tendency to confound our sensations and our perceptions together. But, in proposing this classification, in the beginning of his Essay, there can be no doubt, that Locke meant by *sensation* what Reid calls *perception;* and therefore, to those who have not studied, with more than ordinary care, the whole of Locke's system, it is not surprising that Reid should have the appearance of availing himself of a verbal ambiguity to gain an undue and uncandid advantage over his illustrious predecessor.—(See Priestley's Remarks on this subject in his Examination of Reid.)

Dr Reid's criticism, too, on Locke's trespass against the rules of logical division is, I think, too severe; and derives its plausibility from the ambiguity of the word *reflection*, which Locke, in this instance, as well as in many others, employs as synonymous with *consciousness* *. It is for this reason, that I have substituted the latter word instead of the former, as expressing Locke's meaning with greater precision and clearness.

When Locke's statement is thus interpreted, it does not seem to merit, *in all its extent*, the censure which Reid has bestowed on it. The account which it gives, indeed, of the origin of our ideas, is extremely *incomplete*; but it cannot be said that one member of his division includes the other; the first relating exclusively to the properties of matter, and the second exclusively to the internal phenomena of mind.

I grant, upon the other hand, that if, with Locke's statement, we combine all the subsequent reasonings in his essay, Dr Reid's criticism is *not so wide of the mark*; for I have already endeavoured to shew, that some of his favourite doctrines involve, as a necessary consequence, that *consciousness* is the sole and exclusive source of all our knowledge. But this is merely an *argumentum ad hominem*; *not* a proof, that the division would have been faulty, if detached from the speculations which afterwards occur. Nor would it have been even a correct enunciation of the error on which *this* argument turns, to say, that the second member of the division *included* the first;—the first and second members, according to that interpretation, being *completely identified*.

## NOTE (O), P. 161.

Mr Locke himself prepared the way for Mr Tooke's researches, by the following observations, of which, however, I do not recollect that any notice is taken in the *Diversions of Purley*. "It may also lead us a little towards the original of all our "notions and knowledge, if we remark how great a dependence our words have on "common sensible ideas; and how those which are made use of to stand for actions "and notions quite removed from sense, have their rise from thence, and from obvious "sensible ideas are transferred to more abstruse significations, and made to stand for ideas "that come not under the cognizance of our senses, viz. to imagine, apprehend, compre-"hend, adhere, conceive, instil, disgust, disturbance, tranquillity, &c. are all words ta-

* This ambiguity in the term *reflection* is particularly taken notice of in Dr Reid's essays on the *intellectual powers*. "Reflection ought to be distinguished from consciousness, with which it is too often con-"founded, *even by Locke*. All men are conscious of the operations of their own minds, at all times, while "they are awake; but there are few who reflect upon them, or make them objects of thought."—P. 60, 4to. edit.

" ken from the operations of sensible things, and applied to certain modes of thinking. " Spirit, in its primary signification, is breath: Angel, a messenger; *and I doubt not, but* " *if we could trace them to their sources, we should find, in all languages, the names* " *which stand for things that fall not under our senses, to have had their first rise from* " *sensible ideas.*" From the sentence which follows, it also appears, that Locke, as well as his ingenious disciple, was disposed to connect this philological speculation with his own account of the origin of our ideas.—" By which we may give some kind of guess " what kind of notions they were, and whence derived, which filled their minds, who " were the first beginners of languages; and how nature, even in the naming of things, " unawares suggested to men the *originals and principles of all their knowledge.*"

Condillac, in his *Essai sur l'origine des Connoissances Humaines*, has given his sanction to this conclusion of Locke (Seconde Partie, Sect. 1, chap. x.) And another writer, far superior, in my opinion, to Condillac, as a metaphysician, has brought forward the philological fact stated in the foregoing paragraph, as a *new argument* in favour of the theory which refers to sensation the elements of all our knowledge.

" L'imperfection des langues en ce qu'elles rendent presque toutes les idées intellec- " tuelles par des expressions figurées, c'est-a-dire par des expressions destinées, dans leur " signification propre, à exprimer les idées des objets sensibles; et remarquons en passant, " que cet inconvénient, commun à toutes les langues, suffiroit peut-être pour montrer que " c'est en effet à nos sensations que nous devons toutes nos idées, si cette verité n'etoit " pas d'ailleurs appuyée de mille autres preuves incontestables *."

Hobbes seems to have been the first, or, at least, one of the first who started the idea of this sort of etymological metaphysics. " If it be a false affirmation" (he observes in one passage) " to say *a quadrangle is round*, the word *quadrangle* signifies nothing, " but is a mere sound. So likewise, if it be false to say, that virtue can be *poured*, or " *blown up and down*, the words *in-poured* (infused) *virtue*,—*in-blown* (inspired) *virtue*, " are as absurd and insignificant as a *round quadrangle*. And therefore you shall hard- " ly meet with a senseless and insignificant word, that is not made up of some Latin or " Greek names."—See page 111. of the folio edition of Hobbes, printed at London in 1750; and compare it with page 103 of the same volume.

## NOTE (P), P. 178.

I do not quote the following lines as a favourable specimen of the Abbé de Lille's poetry, but merely as an illustration of the heterogeneous metaphors which obtrude them-

* Melanges, Tome V. p. 26. Amsterdam, 1767.

selves on the fancy, whenever we attempt to describe the phenomena of Memory. It is but justice to him to remark, at the same time, that some of them (particularly those printed in Italics) do no small honour to his philosophical penetration.

" Cependant des objets la trace passagère
" S'enfuirait loin de nous comme une ombre légère,
" Si le ciel n'eût créé ce dépôt précieux,
" Où le goût, l'odorat, et l'oreille, et les yeux,
" Viennent de ces objets déposer les images,
" La mémoire. A ce nom se troublent tous nos sages ;
" Quelle main a creusé ses secrets réservoirs ?
" Quel Dieu range avec art tous ces nombreux tiroirs,
" Les vide ou les remplit, les referme ou les ouvre ?
" Les nerfs sont ses sujets, et la tête est son Louvre.
" Mais comment à ses lois toujours obéissants,
" Vont-ils à son empire assujettir les sens ?
" Comment l'entendent-ils, sitôt qu'elle commande ?
" Comment un souvenir qu'en vain elle demande,
" Dans un temps plus heureux promptement accouru,
" Quand je n'y songeais pas, a-t-il donc reparu ?
" Au plus ancien dépôt quelquefois si fidèle,
" Sur un dépôt récent pourquoi me trahit-elle ?
" Pourquoi cette mémoire, agent si merveilleux,
" Dépend-elle des temps, du hasard et des lieux ?
" Par les soins, par les ans, par les maux affaiblie,
" Comment ressemble-t-elle à la cire vieillie,
" Qui fidèle au cachet qu'elle admit autrefois,
" Refuse une autre empreinte et résiste a mes doigts ?
" Enfin, dans le cerveau si l'image est tracée,
" Comment peut dans un corps s'imprimer la pensée ?
" *Là finit ton savoir, mortel audacieux ;*
" *Va mesurer la terre, interroger les cieux,*
" *De l'immense univers règle l'ordre suprême ;*
" *Mais ne prétends jamais te connaître toi-même ;*
" *Là s'ouvre sous tes yeux un abîme sans fonds.*"—

De Lille. L'Imagination, Chant I.

## NOTE (Q), P. 192.

" It is never from an attention to etymology, which would frequently mislead us, but " from custom, the only infallible guide in this matter, that the meanings of words in

" present use must be learnt. And indeed, if the want in question were material, it " would equally affect all those words, no inconsiderable part of our language, whose " descent is doubtful or unknown. Besides, in no case can the line of derivation be " traced backwards to infinity. We must always terminate in some words of whose " genealogy no account can be given."—Campbell's Philosophy of Rhetoric, Book ii. chap. 2.

In this remark I perfectly agree with the very acute and judicious writer; but I do not well see its connection with the following note which is subjoined to it.

" Dr Johnson, who, notwithstanding his acknowledged learning, penetration, and in- " genuity, appears sometimes, if I may adopt his own expression, ' lost in lexicogra- " phy,' *hath* declared the name *punch*, which signifies a certain mixt liquor very well " known, a cant word, because, being to appearance without etymology, it *hath* pro- " bably arisen from some silly conceit among the people. The name *sherbet*, which " signifies another known mixture, he allows to be good, because it is Arabic; though, " for aught we know, its origin among the Arabs *hath* been equally ignoble or uncer- " tain. By this way of reckoning, if the word *punch*, in the sense wherein we use it, " should, by any accident, be imported into Arabia, and come into use there, it would " make good Arabic, though it be but cant English; as their *sherbet*, though, in all " likelihood, but cant Arabic, makes good English. This, I own, appears to me very " capricious."—Ibid.

I cannot help being of opinion, that, in Dr Johnson's decision concerning the comparative rank of these two words in the English language, he has greatly the advantage over his critic; although nothing, undoubtedly, can be more absurd than *the principle* on which it proceeds; that " those words, which being to appearance without etymology, have " probably arisen from some silly conceit among the people," ought, on that account, to be banished from good writing. The real ground of the difference, in point of effect, which the words *punch* and *sherbet* produce on the ear of an Englishman is, that the former recals images of low life and of disgusting intemperance; whereas the latter, if it at all awakens the fancy, transports it, at once, to the romantic regions of the East. If the Arabians were to feel with respect to England, as every well-educated Englishman feels with respect to Arabia, the word *punch* could not fail to affect their ear, as the word *sherbet* does ours. Nor should this be ascribed to *caprice*, but to the general and unalterable laws of the human frame.

To a Frenchman who never visited this island, and who knows English manners by description alone, the word *punch* has, by no means, the same air of vulgarity with which it appears to our eyes. In fact, I am inclined to believe, that *ponche* and *sorbet* would be considered by him as words of the same class, and standing very nearly on the same level.

I shall avail myself of the opportunity which the last quotation from Dr Campbell affords me, to express my surprise, that an author who has illustrated, so very ably as he has done, the paramount authority of *custom* in all questions relative to language, should have adhered, with such systematic obstinacy, to the antiquated *hath* in preference to *has*. In discourses from the pulpit it certainly contributes to the *solemnity* of style; in consequence, partly, of the use made of it in our excellent translation of the Bible; and partly, of its rare occurrence in our ordinary forms of speaking. If it were universally substituted for *has* (as Swift wished it to be), it would lose this charm altogether; while, in the mean time, nothing would be added to our common diction, but stiffness and formality. A choice of such expressions, according to the nature of our subject, is an advantage which our language possesses in no inconsiderable degree; nor ought it to be the object of a philosophical critic to sacrifice it to a mere speculative refinement.

If analogy is to be followed uniformly as a guide, why does Campbell, in the very same sentence with *hath*, make use of such words as *signifies* and *allows*.—Why not *signifieth* and *alloweth*?

## NOTE (R), P. 211.

I do not here go so far as to assert, that a blind man might not receive, by means of touch, something analogous to our notion of *beauty*. In the case of those who see, the word is, in no instance that I can recollect, applied *immediately* to the perceptions of that sense; but this question, though started in one of the volumes of the *Encyclopedie*, is of no moment whatever in the present inquiry. I have no objection, therefore, to acquiesce in the following statement, as it is there given.

"Il n'y a ni *beau* ni *laid* pour l'odorat et le gout. Le Pere André, Jesuite, dans son "*Essai sur le Beau*, joint même à ces deux sens celui de toucher: mais je crois que son "système peut être contredit en ce point. Il me semble qu'un aveugle a des idées de "rapport, d'ordre, de symmetrie, et que ces notions sont entrées dans son entendement "par le toucher, comme dans le notre par la vue, *moins* parfaites peut-être, et moins "exactes: mais cela prouve tout au plus, que les aveugles sont moins affectés du *beau* "que nous autres clairvoyans.—En un mot, il me paroit bien hardi de prononcer, que "l'aveugle statuaire qui faisoit des bustes ressemblans, n'avoit cependant aucune idée de "*beauté*."—Encyclop. Artic. *Beauté*.

That our notions of the beauty of *visible* objects are, in many instances, powerfully modified by associations originally suggested by the sense of *touch*, will afterwards appear.

## NOTE (S), P. 242.

The following extract from a letter of Dr Swift's to Lord Peterborough, in which he ridicules some of the partial and confined maxims concerning *gardening* which were current in his time, may be applied (*mutatis mutandis*) to most of the theories hitherto proposed with respect to *the beautiful in general.*

——— "That this letter may be all of a piece, I'll fill the rest with an account of a "consultation lately held in my neighbourhood, about designing a princely garden. "Several critics were of several opinions: one declared he would not have too much "art in it: for my notion (said he) of gardening is, that it is only sweeping nature: "another told them, that gravel-walks were not of a good taste, for all the finest abroad "were of loose sand: a third advised peremptorily there should not be one lime-tree in "the whole plantation: a fourth made the same exclusive clause extend to horse-chesnuts, "which he affirmed not to be trees, but weeds. Dutch elms were condemned by a fifth; "and thus about half the trees were prescribed, contrary to the Paradise of God's own "planting, which is expressly said to be planted with *all trees*. There were some who "could not bear ever-greens, and called them never-greens; some who were angry at "them only when cut into shapes, and gave the modern gardeners the name of ever-"green taylors; some, who had no dislike to cones and cubes, but would have them cut "in forest-trees; and some who were in a passion against any thing in shape, even against "clip't hedges, which they called green walls. These (my Lord) are our men of taste, "who pretend to prove it by tasting little or nothing. Sure such a taste is like such "a stomach, not a good one, but a weak one."———

"I have lately been with my Lord —— who is a zealous yet a charitable planter, and "has so bad a taste, as to like all that is good." Pope's Works.

## NOTE (T), P. 271.

The following definition of the word *Picturesque* is given by the Abbe du Bos, in his critical reflections on poetry and painting. I do not think it corresponds exactly with any acceptation in which it has ever been understood in this country. In one respect, it approaches to the definition of Gilpin, mentioned in the text.

"J'appelle composition pittoresque, l'arrangement des objets qui doivent entrer dans "un tableau par rapport à l'effet général du tableau. Une bonne composition pitto-"resque est celle dont le coup d'œil fait un grand effet, suivant l'intention du peintre "et le but qu'il s'est proposé. Il faut pour cela que le tableau ne soit point embarassé

" par les figures, quoiqu'il y en ait assez pour remplir le toile. Il faut que les objets " s'y démêlent facilement. Il ne faut pas que les figures s'estropient l'une l'autre, en " se cachant réciproquement la moitie de la tête, ni d'autres parties du corps, lesquelles il " convient au sujet de faire voir. If faut enfin, que les groupes soient bien com- " posés, que la lumière leur soit distribuée judicieusement, et que les couleurs locales, " loin de s'entretuer, soient disposées de manière qu'il resulte du tout une harmonie " agréeable à l'oeil par elle-meme *."

The chief difference between this definition and that of Gilpin is, that the latter refers chiefly to natural objects; the former exclusively to painting. But both agree in one common idea, that of *a landscape so composed as to produce a happy effect in a picture.* Du Bos applies the epithet to this composition when exhibited by the artist on canvas: Gilpin, to such compositions when they happen to be sketched out to the painter's pencil by the hand of nature herself. *Gilpin's definition, therefore, presupposes the idea which* Du Bos attempts to explain; and may, perhaps, be considered as a generalization of it, applicable both to the combinations of nature, and to the designs of art. It is in the former of these senses, however, that he in general uses the word through the whole of his Essay.

It is remarkable, that Sir J. Reynolds seems, at one time, to have been disposed to restrict the meaning of *picturesque to natural objects;* while the definition of Du Bos would restrict it to the art of painting. From a note of Mr Gilpin's, it appears, that when his Essay was first communicated to Reynolds, the latter objected to the use he *sometimes* made of the term picturesque; observing, that, in his opinion, " this word " should be applied only to the works of nature †." But on this point he seems to have changed his opinion afterwards ‡. In an earlier performance, too, of Reynolds, we find the word employed by himself, in the very same sense in which he objects to it in the above sentence. Speaking of a picture of Rubens (the crucifixion of Christ between the two thieves, at Antwerp), he observes, that " the three crosses are placed prospectively " in an uncommonly *picturesque manner*," &c. &c. (See the rest of the passage, which is worth consulting, in his journey through Flanders and Holland, in the year 1781.)

## NOTE (U), P. 274.

Mr Price has stated, with his usual acuteness and candour, the essential difference between the *philological question* concerning the propriety of his *language* upon this sub-

* Reflexions Critiques, &c. Sect. 31.

† Three Essays on Picturesque Beauty, pp. 35, 36.

‡ Letter to Gilpin, ibid.

ject; and the *philosophical question* concerning the reality of the distinction upon which his treatise hinges. I differ from him only in this, that I consider the former question as of much greater importance than he seems to attach to it. His words are these:—

"I must here observe (and I wish the reader to keep it in his mind), that the in-
"quiry is not in what sense certain words are used in the best authors, still less what is
"their common and vulgar use and abuse; but whether there are certain qualities which
"uniformly produce the same effects in all visible objects, and, according to the same
"analogy, in objects of hearing, and of all the other senses; and which qualities (though
"frequently blended and united with others in the same object or set of objects) may
"be separated from them, and assigned to the class to which they belong.

"If it can be shewn, that a character composed of these qualities, and distinct from
"all others, does prevail through all nature; if it can be traced in the different objects
"of art and of nature, and appears consistent throughout, it surely deserves a distinct
"title; but, with respect to the real ground of inquiry, it matters little whether such a
"character, or the set of objects belonging to it, is called beautiful, sublime, or pictu-
"resque, or by any other name, or by no name at all *."

These remarks must be received with very important limitations; for, granting them to hold (as they certainly do to a considerable extent) with respect to the use of words in any particular language, they certainly will not apply to cases where the same *transitive* or *metaphorical* meanings follow, in a variety of different tongues, the corresponding terms in all of them. This, I flatter myself, I have already shewn with sufficient clearness.

As to the *philosophical question* about the two sets of qualities distinguished by Mr Price, I not only agree with him in almost all the critical observations which he has introduced in the course of the discussion, but I esteem his work, as eminently calculated, in its practical tendency, to reform and to improve the public taste. I confess, at the same time, I am somewhat afraid, that the vagueness and ambiguity of his favourite term may give rise to many misapplications of his principles, very remote from the intentions of the author. The picturesque cottages, and picturesque porters'-lodges, which have lately been starting up all over the country, (to the greater part of which we may apply the happy expression of Delille—"Veut être pittoresque et n'est que ridicule,") afford a proof, that this apprehension is not without some foundation.

## NOTE (X), P. 307.

"Un peintre, qui de tous les talens nécessaires pour former le grand artisan, n'a que
"celui de *bien colorer*, decide qu'un tableau est excellent, ou qu'il ne vaut rien en géné-

* Essay on the Picturesque, pp. 40, 41.

" ral, suivant que l'ouvrier a sçu manier la couleur. La poesie du tableau est comptée " pour peu de chose, pour rien même, dans son jugement. Il fait sa decision, sans aucun " égard aux parties de l'art quil n'a point." (Reflexions Crit. sur la Poesie et sur la Peinture.)

## NOTE (Y), P. 317.

For the following very judicious remark of Mr Burke's, on the philosophical speculations of Sir J. Reynolds, the public is indebted to Mr Malone. (V. 1. XCVII.)

" He was a great generalizer, and was fond of reducing every thing to one system, " more perhaps than the variety of principles which operate in the human mind, and in " every human work, will properly endure. But this disposition to abstractions, to ge- " neralizing, and classification, is the greatest glory of the human mind, *that* indeed which " most distinguishes man from other animals, and is the source of every thing that can " be called science. I believe, his early acquaintance with Mr Mudge of Exeter, a very " learned and thinking man, and much inclined to philosophize in the spirit of the Pla- " tonists, disposed him to this habit. He certainly, by that means, liberalized, in a high " degree, the theory of his own art; and if he had been more methodically instituted in " the early part of life, and had possessed more leisure for study and reflection, he would, " in my opinion, have pursued this method with great success."

## NOTE (Z), P. 348.

Since finishing this Essay, I find that I have been partly anticipated in the foregoing remark by Mr Hume, who, in his Treatise of Human Nature, expresses himself thus :—

" 'Tis a quality very observable in human nature, that any opposition which does not " entirely discourage and intimidate us, has rather a contrary effect, and inspires us with " a more than ordinary grandeur and magnanimity. In collecting our force to over- " come the opposition, we invigorate the soul, and give it an elevation with which " otherwise it would never have been acquainted. Compliance, by rendering our " strength useless, makes us insensible of it; but opposition awakens and employs it.

" This is also true in the inverse. Opposition not only enlarges the soul, but the " soul, when full of courage and magnanimity, in a manner seeks opposition.——These " principles have an effect on the imagination as well as on the passions. To be con- " vinced of this, we need only consider the influence of *heights* and *depths* on that fa- " culty. Any great elevation of place, communicates a kind of pride or sublimity of " imagination, and gives a fancied superiority over those that lie below; and, *vice versa*,

"a sublime and strong imagination conveys the idea of ascent and elevation: Hence it "proceeds, that we associate, in a manner, the idea of whatever is good with that of "height, and evil with lowness. Heaven is supposed to be above, and hell below. A "noble genius is called an elevated and sublime one. *Et udam Spernit humum fugi-* "*ente penna.* On the contrary, a vulgar and trivial conception is styled indifferently, "low or mean. Prosperity is denominated ascent, and adversity descent. Kings and "princes are supposed to be placed at the top of human affairs; as peasants and day- "labourers are said to be in the lowest stations. These methods of thinking and of ex- "pressing ourselves, are not of so little consequence as they may appear at first sight.

"'Tis evident to common sense as well as philosophy, that there is no natural nor "essential difference betwixt high and low, and that this distinction arises only from the "gravitation of matter, which produces a motion from the one to the other. The very "same direction, which in this part of the globe is called ascent, is denominated descent "in our antipodes; which can proceed from nothing but the contrary tendency of bodies. "Now 'tis certain, that the tendency of bodies, continually operating upon our senses, must "produce, from custom, a like tendency in the fancy, and that when we consider any "object situated in an ascent, the idea of its weight gives us a propensity to transport "it from the place in which it is situated to the place immediately below it, and so on "'till we come to the ground, which equally stops the body and our imagination. For "a like reason we feel a difficulty in mounting, and pass not without a kind of re- "luctance from the inferior to that which is situated above it, as if our ideas acquired "a kind of gravity from their objects. As a proof of this, do we not find that the fa- "cility, which is so much studied in music and poetry, is called the fall or cadency of "the harmony or period; the idea of facility communicating to us that of descent, in "the same manner as descent produces a facility?

"Since the imagination, therefore, in running from low to high, finds an opposition "in its internal qualities and principles, and since the soul, when elevated with joy and "courage, in a manner seeks opposition, and throws itself with alacrity into any scene "of thought or action, where its courage meets with matter to nourish and employ it; "it follows, that every thing which invigorates and enlivens the soul, whether by touch- "ing the passions or imagination, naturally conveys to the fancy this inclination for "ascent, and determines it to run against the natural stream of its thoughts and concep- "tions. This aspiring progress of the imagination suits the present disposition of the "mind; and the difficulty, instead of extinguishing its vigour and alacrity, has the con- "trary effect of sustaining and increasing it. Virtue, genius, power, and riches, are for "this reason associated with height and sublimity, as poverty, slavery, and folly are "conjoined with descent and lowness. Were the case the same with us as Milton re- "presents it to be with the angels, to whom *descent is adverse*, and who *cannot sink*

" *without labour and compulsion*, this order of things would be entirely inverted ; as ap-
" pears hence, that the very nature of ascent and descent is derived from the difficulty
" and propensity, and, consequently, every one of their effects proceeds from that ori-
" gin." Treatise of Human Nature, Vol. II. p. 281, et seq.

Though I must have repeatedly read the above passage in Mr Hume's works, it had totally escaped my recollection, till I met with a short abstract of it very lately, in turning over Dr Gerard's ingenious Essay on Taste.

## NOTE (A a), P. 350.

" As for the position, or attitude of virtue ; though in a historical piece, such as ours
" is designed, it would on no account be proper to have immediate recourse to the way
" of emblem ; one might, on this occasion endeavour, nevertheless, by some artifice, to
" give our figure, as much as possible, the resemblance of the same goddess, as she is seen
" on medals, and other ancient emblematic pieces of like nature. In this view, she
" should be so designed, as to stand firm with her full poise upon one foot, having the
" other a little advanced and raised on a broken piece of ground or rock, instead of the
" helmet or little globe on which we see her usually setting her foot, as triumphant, in
" those pieces of the emblematic kind. A particular advantage of this attitude, so judi-
" ciously assigned to virtue by ancient masters, is, that it expresses as well her aspiring
" effort, or ascent towards the stars and heaven, as her victory and superiority over for-
" tune and the world. For so the poets have described her. And in our piece particu-
" larly, where the arduous and rocky way of virtue requires to be emphatically re-
" presented, the ascending posture of this figure, with one foot advanced, in a sort of
" climbing action, over the rough and thorny ground, must of necessity, if well execut-
" ed, create a due effect, and add to the sublime of this antient poetic work."

See a treatise, by Lord Shaftesbury, entitled, " a Notion of the Historical Draught of
" the Judgment of Hercules, according to Prodicus, &c."

See also La Gerusalemme Liberata. Canto 17. Stan. 61, 62.

## NOTE (B b), P. 358.

In Boileau's translation of Longinus, as in the English one of Smith, the word βαθος is omitted ; but in the edition of this translation, published by M. de St Marc, the following note is subjoined to the text: " Le Grec dit *un art du Sublime ou du Pro-*
" *fond*. Tous les interpretes ont pris ces deux termes pour synonymes. J'ai peine à
" croire, que Longin ait voulu les employer comme tels. Ce n'est que dans ce seul en-

" droit qu'ils sont mis avec la particule disjonctive ; partout ailleurs la conjonction les " unit dans une même phrase. Je pense donc, qui par le sublime et le profond notre " Rhéteur a voulu présenter deux idées différentes. Et dans le fait, ces deux différentes " idées conviennent également à son sujet. La *Profondeur* n'est pas moins nécessaire " que le *Sublime* à la grande Eloquence."

Instead, however, of supposing Longinus to have been influenced, in the above passage, by the conceit suggested by the French critic, it seems to me much more reasonable to conclude, that he had an eye to the similarity of the impressions produced, in many instances, by *height* and by *depth*, both in their literal and in their figurative acceptations. Various proofs of this similarity will occur in the sequel of this Essay.

## NOTE (C c.), P. 367.

The tedious controversy about the sublimity of this passage of scripture, which was provoked among the French critics, by a letter from Huet, Bishop of Avranches, to the Duke of Montausier, would now be scarcely remembered (at least in this country), were it not for the space which it is so absurdly allowed to occupy, in some of the best editions of Boileau's works.——The only English writer of note who has given any countenance to the Bishop's paradox is Lord Kames, who, after mentioning the dispute to which it gave rise, as a curious occurrence in literary history, observes that, in the opinions held by both parties, there was a mixture of truth and of error ; the passage in question being *sublime* in one point of view, and *not sublime* in another. For the grounds on which this decision rests, see *Elements of Criticism*.

A French poet of our own times, in alluding to the wonders of creative power, has attempted, by means of a very singular personification, to rise still higher than the sacred historian. With what success I leave to the reader to judge.

" *L'Imagination, féconde enchanteresse,*
" Qui fait mieux que garder et que se souvenir,
" Retrace le passé, devance l'avenir,
" Refait tout ce qui fut, fait tout ce qui doit être,
" Dit à l'un d'exister, à l'autre de renaître ;
" Et comme à l'Eternel, quand sa voix l'appela,
" *L'être encore au néant lui repond : me Voilà.*

It is with some regret I mention, that these lines are extracted from the works of an author, equally distinguished by the beauty and the fertility of his genius,—the Abbé de Lille.

## NOTE (Dd), P. 369.

Mr Burke has passed too slightly over the subject of *infinity*, without turning his attention to its two different modifications,—*immensity* and *eternity*. The latter seems to me to contribute still more to *the sublime* than the former. Is not this owing to its coming home more directly to our personal feelings: and consequently (according to Mr Burke's own doctrine) to a certain mixture of the *terrible*, or at least of the *awful*, inseparable from the conception?

With respect to that portion of eternity which is already past, there is another circumstance which conspires with those already mentioned, in leading us to connect with it an emotion of sublimity.——I mean the bias of the mind (arising chiefly, it is probable, from associations early established in the fancy by the phenomena of falling bodies) in speaking of the history of former ages, to employ words literally expressive of elevated position. We call ourselves "the *descendants* of our ancestors;"—we speak of "tracing *up* our genealogy;"—"of honours or of estates *descending* in the male, or in the female lines." We speak, in like manner, of traditions *handed down* from one generation to another; nay, we sometimes employ the word *high*, as synonymous with *extremely ancient*. "The nominal observation" (says Dr Brown in a sentence quoted by Dr Johnson) "of the several days of the week is very *high*, and as old as the ancient "Egyptians, who named the same according to the seven planets." Another authority to the same purpose is afforded by Prior:

> "The son of Adam and of Eve,
> "Can Bourbon or Nassau go higher?"

Is not the veneration with which we look up to antiquity *partly* owing to the influence of these associations?—Mr Hume has attempted to account for it upon a different principle: but his theory is to me quite unintelligible: "Because we find greater difficulty, and must employ superior energy, in running over the parts of duration than "those of space; and in ascending through past duration, than in descending through "what is future: therefore, we value higher, and contemplate with greater veneration, "things distant in time, than things remote in space, and the persons and objects of antiquity, than those which we figure to ourselves in the ages of futurity." What are we to understand by *the superior energy we employ in running over the parts of duration than those of space; and in ascending through past duration, than in descending through what is future?* So far as I am able to annex any meaning to this passage, the fact is precisely the reverse of what is here stated. To ascend through *past duration*,

is the habitual employment of the mind in the exercise of memory, and in the study of history. To descend through *future duration*, by anticipating events before they happen, is, of all employments of the understanding, the most difficult; and it is one, in which the soundest and most sagacious judgments are perpetually liable to error and disappointment. It is singular, that the use which Mr Hume has made, in the above sentence, of the metaphorical expressions *ascending* and *descending*, did not suggest to him a simpler solution of the problem.

I will take the liberty of remarking further, with respect to this theory of Mr Hume's, that it is not "with our anticipations of the future, that our veneration for the persons "and objects of antiquity" ought to have been contrasted, but with our sentiments concerning what is contemporary with ourselves, or of a very modern date. The idea of *the future*, which is the region of all our hopes, and of all our fears, is, in most cases, for that very reason, more interesting to the imagination than the idea of *the past*; and the idea of the *eternity post* (to borrow a scholastic phrase) incomparably more so than that of the *eternity ante*.

The bias of the mind to connect together the ideas of *antiquity*, and of *elevated place*, is powerfully confirmed by another association, coinciding entirely with the former, in suggesting the same modes of expression. Among the various natural objects which attract a child's curiosity, there is, perhaps, none which awakens a more lively interest, than the river which it sees daily and hourly hastening along its channel. Whence does it come? and where is it going? are questions which some of my readers may still remember to have asked: Nor is it even impossible, that they may retain a faint recollection of the surprise and delight with which they first learned, that rivers come down from the mountains, and that they all run into the sea. As the faculties of the understanding begin to open to notions abstracted from matter, an analogy comes invariably and infallibly to be apprehended between *this endless stream of water*, and the *endless stream of time*; an analogy rendered still more impressive by the parallel relations which they bear, the one to the Ocean, the other to Eternity. The *flux* of time, the *lapse* of time, the *tide* of time, with many other expressions of the same sort, afford sufficient evidence of the facility with which the fancy passes from the one subject to the other. Hence, too, it is, that the antiquary is said to trace the history of laws, of arts, and of languages, to their *fountain heads*, or *original sources*; and hence, the synonymous meanings, wherever *time* is concerned, of the words *backward* and *upward*. To carry our researches *up* or *back* to a particular æra, are phrases equally sanctioned by our best writers. Nor is it only in our own language that these terms are convertible. In *the Greek*, they are so to a still greater extent; the preposition ἀνα, when in composition, sometimes having the force of the word *sursum*, sometimes that of the word *retro*.

It is scarcely necessary for me to remark, how exactly and how irresistibly all these different associations conspire with each other, in producing an uniformity of thought and of language among mankind, with respect to the two great modifications of time, the *past* and the *future*.

I shall only mention one other circumstance, contributing to the same end.—The filial respect with which we literally, as well as metaphorically, *look up* to our parents, during our early years, insensibly extends itself to *their* progenitors, producing, not unnaturally, that illusion of the imagination which magnifies the endowments, both bodily and mental, of our ancestors, in proportion as we carry our thoughts backward from the present period; and which, in ruder ages, terminates at last in a sentiment approaching nearly to that of religion. *Datur hæc venia antiquitati, ut miscendo humana divinis, primordia rerum augustiora faciat.*

In the Christian world, however, it is chiefly the scripture history which has invested remote antiquity with a character of sublimity, blending our earliest religious impressions with the pictures of patriarchal manners, with the events of the antediluvian ages, with the story of our first parents, and, above all, with the emotions inspired by that simple and sublime *exordium*,—" In the beginning, God created the Heavens and the " Earth."

## NOTE (E e), P. 387.

Among the various instances of the sublime, quoted from Homer by Longinus, the following *simile* has always, in a more particular manner, attracted the attention of succeeding critics :—

" Ὅσσον δ' ἠεροειδες ανηρ ιδεν οφθαλμοισιν,
" Ἡμενος εν σκοπιη, λευσσων επι οινοπα ποντον,
" Τοσσον επιθρωσκουσι θεων ὑψοχεες ἱπποι *."

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* Lib. V. l. 770.

" Far as a shepherd from some point on high
" O'er the wide main extends his boundless eye,
" Through such a space of air, with thundering sound,
" At one long leap th' immortal coursers bound."

Whatever sublimity may belong to these lines, I am inclined to ascribe almost entirely to the image of the shepherd, and to the commanding prospect he enjoys from his elevated situation.

## NOTE (F f), P. 398.

Marmontel, in one of the best of his elementary books, has laid hold of the same analogy, to explain to his pupils the respective effects of analysis and synthesis, as exemplified in the structure of language.

"Vous voyez que c'est par foiblesse que l'esprit humain généralise ses idées.——— "——— Pour l'homme c'est un besoin de simplifier ses idées, à mesure qu'elles "se multiplient; et ces généralisations, dans lesquelles les différences spécifiques et in- "dividuelles sont oubliées, et qui font naissent une multitude de souvenirs en un seul point "de ressemblance, ne sont qu'une facilité que se donne l'esprit pour soulager sa vue. "C'est une position commode qu'il prend pour dominer sur un plus grand nombre "d'objets; et, de cette espèce d'éminence où il s'est placé, sa véritable action consiste "à redescendre l'echelle des idées, en restituant à chacune les différences de son objet, "ses propriétés distinctives; et en composant, par la *synthese* ce qui par *l'analyse* il avoit "simplifié." (Grammaire, p. 8.)

## NOTE (G g), P. 399.

Mr Maclaurin has taken notice of the former of these circumstances in the introduction to his Treatise of Fluxions.—"Others, in the place of indivisible, substituted infi- "nitely small divisible elements, of which they supposed all magnitudes to be formed. "After these came to be relished, an infinite scale of infinitudes and infinitesimals (as- "cending and descending always by infinite steps) was imagined and proposed to be re- "ceived into geometry, as of the greatest use for penetrating into its abstruse parts. "Some have argued for quantities more than infinite; and others for a kind of quantities "that are said to be neither finite nor infinite, but of an intermediate and indeterminate "nature.

"This way of considering what is called the sublime part of geometry has so far pre- "vailed, that it is generally known by no less a title than the science, the arithmetic, or "the geometry of infinitics. These terms imply something lofty but mysterious; the con- "templation of which may be suspected to amaze and perplex, rather than satisfy or en- "lighten the understanding; and while it seems greatly to elevate geometry, may possibly

" lessen its true and real excellency, which chiefly consists in its perspicuity and perfect " evidence." [redacted]aurin's Fluxions, Vol. I. p. 2.

Fontenelle, who possessed the rare talent of adorning mathematical science with the attractions of a refined wit and a lively eloquence, contributed perhaps more than any other individual, by the popularity of his writings, to give a currency to this paradoxical phraseology. In one passage he seems to reproach his predecessors for the timid caution with which they had avoided these sublime speculations; ascribing it to something resembling the holy dread inspired by the mysteries of religion:—A remark, by the way, which affords an additional illustration of the close alliance between the sublime and the awful. " Quand on y étoit arrivé, on s'arrêtoit avec une espèce d'effroi et de sainte " horreur.——On regardoit l'infini comme un mystère qu'il falloit respecter, et qu'il " n'étoit pas permis d'approfondir." Préface des Elem. de la Geom. de l'Infini.

In the same page of the text, I have observed, that, " with the exception of the higher " parts of mathematics, and *one or two others*, for which it is easy to account, the epi- " thet universally applied to the more abstruse branches of knowledge is not *sublime* " but *profound*." One of the exceptions here alluded to, is the application we occasionally make of the former of these words to moral speculations, and also to *some* of those metaphysical researches which are connected with the doctrines of religion; a mode of speaking which is fully accounted for in the preceding part of this essay.

Agreeably to the same analogy, Milton applies to the metaphysical discussions of the fallen angels the word *high* in preference to *deep*. The whole passage is, in this point of view, deserving of attention, as it illustrates strongly the facility with which the thoughts unconsciously pass and repass from the literal to the metaphorical sublime.

> " Others apart sat *on a hill* retired,
> " In thoughts more *elevate*, and *reason'd high*
> " Of Providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate:
> " Fix'd fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute."

## NOTE (H h), P. 406.

In the effect of this superiority of stature, there seems to be something specifically different from that produced by an apparent superiority of *strength*. A broad Herculean make would suggest ideas much less nearly allied to sublimity, and would even detract from the respect which the same stature, with a less athletic form, would have commanded. A good deal must here be ascribed to that apprehended analogy between a towering shape and a lofty mind, which has transferred metaphorically so many terms from the former to the latter; and, perhaps, something also to a childish but natural

association, grafting a feeling of reverence on that elevation of body to which we are forced to *look upwards*.

The influence of similar associations may be traced in the universal practice of decorating the helmets of warriors with plumes of feathers; in the artificial means employed to give either a real or apparent augmentation of stature to the heroes of the buskin; and in the forms of respectful salutation prevalent in all countries; which forms, however various and arbitrary they may at first sight appear, seem all to agree (according to an ingenious remark of Sir Joshua Reynolds) in the common idea of making the body less, in token of reverence.

## NOTE (I i), P. 407.

Longinus has expressed this idea very unequivocally, when he tells us: "Ακροτης "ᾗ εξοχη τις λογων εστι τὰ ὑψη;" and, if possible, still more explicitly, his French translator, Boileau; "*Le sublime est en effet ce qui forme l'excellence et la souveraine* "*perfection du discours.*" To this version Boileau adds, "Cela s'entend plus aisément "que cela ne se peut rendre en François. Ακροτης veut dire *summitas, l'extremité en* "*hauteur; ce qu'il y a de plus élevé dans ce qui est élevé.* Le mot εξοχη signifie à peu "près la même chose, c'est à dire, *eminentia, ce qui s'éleve au-dessus du reste.* C'est sur "ces deux termes, dont la signification est superlative, et que Longin prend au figuré, "que je me suis fondé pour soutenir que son dessein est de traiter du genre *sublime de* "*l'eloquence dans son plus haut point de perfection.*" (Remarques sur la Traduction du Traité du Sublime.) Oeuvres de Boileau, Tom. V. Amsterdam, 1775.

In defence of Longinus's application of the epithet sublime to Sappho's Ode, Mr Knight maintains, that *the Pathetic is always Sublime.* "All sympathies (he observes) "excited by just and appropriate expression of energic passions, whether they be of the "tender or violent kind, are alike sublime, as they all tend to expand and elevate the "mind, and fill it with those enthusiastic raptures, which Longinus justly states to be "the true feelings of sublimity. Hence that author cites instances of the sublime from "the tenderest odes of love, as well as from the most terrific images of war, and with "equal propriety." In a subsequent part of his work, Mr Knight asserts, that "in "all the fictions, either of poetry or imitative art, there can be nothing truly pathetic, "unless it be at the same time in some degree sublime." In this assertion he has certainly lost sight entirely of the meaning in which the words Sublime and Pathetic are commonly understood in our language; a standard of judgment, upon questions of this sort, from which there lies no appeal to the arbitrary definition of any theorist; not even to the authority of Longinus himself. Upon an accurate examination of the subject, it

will be found that, like most other authors who have treated of Sublimity, he has proceeded on the supposition of the possibility of bringing under one precise definition, the views of sublimity taken both by the ancients and by the moderns, without making due allowances for the numberless modifications of the idea, which may be expected from their different systems of manners, from their different religious creeds, and from various other causes. Whoever reflects on the meaning of the word *Virtus* as employed by the earlier Romans, and compares it with the *Virtù* of their degenerate descendants, will not be surprised at the anomalies he meets with, in attempting to reconcile completely the doctrines of ancient and modern critics concerning the Sublime; and will find reason to be satisfied, when he is able to give a plausible account of some of these anomalies from their different habits of thinking, and their different modes of philosophising upon the principles of criticism.

"Appellata est a *Viro* virtus. *Viri autem* propria maximè est fortitudo, cujus munera "duo maxima sunt, mortis dolorisque contemptio." Cic. Tusc. 2. 18.

"*Virtus* signifia d'abord la *force*, ensuite le *courage*, ensuite la *grandeur morale*. "Chez les Italiens, *virtù* ne designe guère que la pratique des beaux arts; et le mot qui, "dans son origine, exprimait la qualité qui distingue éminemment l'homme, est donné "aujourd'hui à des êtres qui ont perdu la qualité distinctive de l'homme. Un *Soprano* "est le *Virtuoso* par excellence." Suard. Essai sur la vie et le caractère du Tasse.

In the instances of the *sublime*, it seems to me to be much less wonderful that there should be some anomalies in the use made of this word by Longinus, when compared with our present modes of thinking and of speaking, than that the points of coincidence should be so many between his view of the subject, and that which we meet with in the best books of philosophical criticism which have yet appeared.

I shall take this opportunity to remark (although the observation has no immediate connection with the foregoing train of thinking), that a talent for the *pathetic*, and a talent for *humour*, are generally united in the same person. *Wit* is more nearly allied to a taste for the *sublime*. I have found the observation verified, as far as my own knowledge extends, whether of men or of books. Nor do I think it would be difficult to explain the fact, from the acknowledged laws of the human mind.

## NOTE (K k), P. 408.

The eloquent and philosophical passage which I am now to quote, with respect to the final cause of the pleasures connected with the emotion of Sublimity, affords a proof, that the views of Longinus occasionally rose from the professed and principal object of his

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